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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to find out what happens in the lives of Chinese immigrant children and youth when they come from the Orient to the United States. The study, confined to New York City immigrants, presents a brief historical background, describes the immigrant experience of family, school and neighborhood, identifies problem areas such as bilingual education, bicultural conflict and gangs, and outlines support systems such as after-school programs and peer groups. The immigrant experience of changing status and roles and social and psychological adjustment are also investigated. Information was obtained from school records and through home visits, participant observation and a survey questionnaire. Findings are summarized at the end of each of 11 chapters. It is concluded that the children in general are doing well academically and exhibit few behavioral problems. The Chinese family is altered by life in the United States: particularly, parental absence is a common feature of the new life. Ethnic community structures and institutions are not equipped to handle the large number of recent immigrants. Policy recommendations are offered. (Author/RH)

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TRANSPLANTED CHINESE CHILDREN

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THE CITY COLLEGE OF NEW YORK

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-- BETTY LEE SUNG
The City College of New York
1979

INTRODUCTION

Objectives

"What are you going to do, and how are you going to go about doing it? Those are the questions," declared the experienced scholar whom the author had come to consult. The past president of the American Anthropological Association, Dr. Francis Hsu, didn't waste many words in coming to the point. His own voluminous research and writings no doubt had taught him to cut through verbiage and go straight to the heart of the matter.

"Your project is to find out what happens to Chinese immigrant children and youth after they arrive in this country. In other words, you are going to show how reaction or behavior is changed in going from one culture to another. You are going to find out which cultural traits are changed, which are retained, and which are modified to accommodate to the new situation. For instance, if I am chilly, how do I react? I could look for a sweater, or I could call down to the superintendent to send up some heat, or I could crawl under the blankets. Those could be my responses to to the discomfort of being chilly."

Dr. Hsu could not have chosen a more apt example. Immediately, I saw how a Chinese immigrant and a native American would react differently in some respects and the same in other respects. No doubt the immigrant--or, for that matter, most people the world over--would put on more clothing. That would be a universal reaction. Only in those countries where central heating is commonly found would a person even think about going to the telephone and asking the superintendent for more heat. It can be said with certainty that a Chinese immigrant would not pick up the telephone. In all likelihood, he would not be able to speak English; furthermore, the telephone would be a novelty to him and he might not know how to use it. Thirdly, the idea of central heating may not even enter his mind. It is far more likely that a new immigrant might respond to his chilly discomfort by looking for a charcoal burner and end up getting into trouble with the landlord for smoking up the apartment or creating a fire hazard. In an instance like this, he would be following habits that are obsolete in his new surroundings. At the same time, he would not be aware of nor know how to gain access to new ways of resolving his problem. The last alternative, to crawl under the blankets, is also a universal reaction, as Dr. Hsu pointed out, but again this remedy would be a regressive solution and most impractical. How long can one remain in bed?

In changing one's habitat and going from one culture to another, one must unlearn as well as learn. We can see that even the most basic activities of our daily lives are grounded in a cultural context and that differences between cultures must be bridged. To use the above example as a simple analogy, that is what this project pupports to do: Find out what happens in the lives of Chinese immigrant children and youth when they make that transoceanic leap from the Orient to American soil. More than geography is involved. The language, ways of thinking, behavior, responses, customs and fundamental beliefs are poles apart. The entire body of culture with which the immigrants are cloaked is called into question. Even though they may find some aspects of the old culture obsolete, they are loath to give up that which is part of them. How much of the new must they take on to function adequately? How much are they handicapped at first? How long does it take to acquire some of the new ways? How much of their culture do they retain? Which parts are universal and can be transferred? The research will attempt to throw light on these aspects of the immigrant experience.

Toward this purpose, information was sought on the following main topics:

- Historical perspective.
- Accurate and detailed description of the family, school, and neighborhood.
- Problem areas such as bilingual education, bicultural conflict, and gangs.
- Support systems such as after-school programs and peer groups.
- Changing status and roles.
- Social and psychological adjustment.

Limits

How did we proceed to accomplish our purpose? Some very definite limits had to be drawn. The study was confined to New York City (five boroughs, not metropolitan area) because large numbers of Chinese immigrants are heading for this eastern metropolis. In fact, our subjects were drawn from only two boroughs, Manhattan and Queens, because it is there that the two main Chinese communities in the city are located. The subjects were selected from the three levels of school: elementary, junior high, and high school. Three schools were chosen from Manhattan's Chinatown area and three from the satellite Chinatown community, one from each level, for a total of six schools. Within these levels we narrowed our focus down to the third and fifth grades in the elementary schools, the seventh grade in the junior high, and the students in the bilingual programs in the pair of high schools.

The schools selected had good size Chinese student populations, but not disproportionately large ones. In order to conduct our research, we first had to contact the Board of Education for permission. For each school, the district superintendent and the principal had to give their consent. For the respondents and subjects under eighteen years of age, permission slips had to be signed by the parents. Many hours were spent obtaining permission from these sources before our research could begin. Because of time constraints, no attempt was made to study those who were widely dispersed or scattered throughout the schools in the city. It would have been impractical for us to extend the research to cover a fair sample of those recent immigrant pupils who were the isolated few in their schools.

Methodology

Professor Stanley Sue, one of the consultants on this project, suggested that a comparison be made between pupils who had made a fairly good adjustment and those who had not. We planned to pair students by age group or school level. The intent was to note what factors in their lives contributed to the well-adjustment or maladjustment of these pupils in their immigrant experience. With this as our starting point, we made inquiries of the teachers, principals, and deans to locate likely subjects, based upon their assessment and evaluation. This avenue led to a dead end. The teachers suggested many well-adjusted candidates, but when asked about the maladjusted, teachers and deans would give us comments like: "I've been in this school for eight years, and only two exceptional behavioral problems involving Chinese children have come to my attention"; or, "I know they just sit there with a blank look on their faces now, but within a year or so they will have caught on." The few incidences cited could not be paired with well-adjusted students for comparison.

In our revised approach, we decided to try to paint as accurate and descriptive a picture as possible to provide a sense of what happens to immigrant children when they arrive in this country. The home, the school, and the neighborhood are the child's universe. How are these areas different from the ones from which the child came? In their structure do they facilitate or impede adjustment? Are they sources of strength in the development of the children and adolescents or are they breeding grounds for future trouble?

The large-scale presence of young children and teenagers in Chinese-American communities is such a recent phenomenon that very little literature is available on the topic. Social scientists--even Chinese-American ones--have been timid about going directly into the Chinese communities for first-hand studies. (See bibliographic references Shirley Hune, Pacific Migration to the United States: Trends and Themes in Historical and Sociological Literature, page 205). First-hand research means going to the scene and ferreting out the information. It means plenty of legwork tracking down persons and checking out accounts. It means trudging up narrow stairs and hallways to knock on doors that do not open. It means hours of establishing rapport before one can begin to ask questions. The data we sought were not to be found on library shelves nor between the covers of books. It was life as it was being lived. There are bits and pieces of writings in reports and little-known sources, but these, too, had to be uncovered and put together in a meaningful picture.

Impediments

Seeking information from a community that has always found it more discreet to reveal nothing is a task that calls for ingenuity and perseverance. For one thing, the researchers must be familiar with the community and its undercurrents. They must be aware of the stance of each informant if they are to be able to objectively evaluate the information obtained. For example, a social service worker may overstate a problem to justify his program. A teacher may attack bilingual education because his own job is threatened if he lacks bilingual skills. Adversaries may make comments against each other that are colored by their prejudices. The author of this project has been a keen observer of the Chinese community for nearly three decades. She has written extensively on this subject and, therefore, brings depth and breadth to the undertaking.

The Chinese people are suspicious of outsiders, but they are careful not to offend, consequently very often they will provide "put-off" information contrary to fact. Many of the techniques for doing so are extremely subtle, and it is a game they enjoy playing. In fact, if you ask the Chinatown elders about the gangs, they will deny that gangs exist. Others will admonish the researcher not to write anything uncomplimentary about the people or the community. They are concerned about "face" and are prone to burying their heads in the sand. Social science research is something foreign to their past experiences. Hence, the unfamiliar to them is cause for suspicion.

Fortunately, in most instances, the schools were extremely cooperative. The teachers understood the importance of and need for the research, although some thought we might uncover data unfavorable to their teaching performance and were a little bit on the defensive side. Some schools kept excellent records and these we could tap into immediately. To obtain comparative data we would then have to construct the same data for the matched school, if at all possible. Obviously, at times, it was not possible to do so. Some records that could have thrown better light upon the situation were private, and we were not given access to them. In such instances, we relied upon what we could obtain. An example would be the academic records. Thus, we could not match names with the grades to see how any particular pupil was doing, but we were able to examine the grades without the names.

Stipulation from the Board of Education was that we could not identify the schools studied by name. We could refer to them only in a general way. Nor were we to identify any principal or teacher by name. Consequently, we have had to be vague at times, reporting that "A teacher said," rather than being specific in ascribing comments and statements.

The most difficult part of our research was the home visits to talk to the parents or to see what the homes were like. The Chinatown community is no longer a safe one and few people open their doors to strangers. But the main factor was that the parents were rarely home, especially the fathers. Since we saw few fathers in the homes, this is a vacuum that must be taken into consideration.

Even when we gained access to respondents and managed to establish some trust and rapport, we found that many of these folks had a very limited vocabulary and even more limited experience. Not that there was a language barrier; the principal investigator speaks three Chinese dialects--Toishan, Cantonese, and Mandarin,--and her research associate speaks Cantonese and Mandarin, but communication was difficult with a group made up primarily of the lower educational stratum. The respondents tended to be nonverbal and to speak more in generalities rather than specifics. It took skillful prodding to elicit the type of information sought.

Fieldwork

How did we go about our research? First, we constructed a framework for the type of information sought about the recent immigrant children and youth within their home, school, and neighborhood environment. Sample topics within the framework were: interaction with non-Chinese peers or attitude of students toward teacher. We relied upon three methods: Observation, interviews, and surveys. At the two lower school levels, observation and interviews played the larger part. At the high school level, a survey was also utilized.

As researchers we sat in on classes, visited the lunchrooms, roamed the school yards to watch the children at play, stood in front of the schools to observe the children arrive and leave, stayed for the after-school centers, talked to teachers, security guards, deans, attendance officers, principals, guidance counselors, and, of course, the students. Visits were made to community agencies to talk to policemen, a judge, street workers, social workers, family workers, community leaders, ministers, newspapermen, even gang members.

We observed, we listened, we asked questions, and we looked for occurrences that were not just isolated incidents but fairly recurrent. Examples noted were the absence of parents from the homes, the long working hours of the pupils from elementary school through high school, the higher socio-economic status of the residents of the satellite Chinese community over that of the Chinatown residents, and the fear that the gangs evoked among the teenage boys. After a period of immersion in the schools and the communities, one began to develop a sixth sense about things.

We did undertake a survey, administered to the students in the high school bilingual programs in both communities. Answering the questionnaire was voluntary. The students were asked to come to a certain room during their lunch period where they were served roast pork buns and drinks while they answered the questionnaire. The two researchers took turns explaining the questionnaire in both English and Chinese. They read each of the questions, allowing time for the students to answer. In other words, the questionnaire was administered under supervised conditions to about twenty to thirty students at a time. Two hundred students out of 430 enrolled in the Chinatown high school bilingual program came voluntarily to answer the questionnaire. Seventy, or almost all, from the satellite Chinatown community high school bilingual program answered the questionnaire. Tabulation of the results from the survey provided very revealing insight into the daily lives, outlook, and attitudes of the teenagers and youths, who could assess their inner feelings about their transplantation from one continent to another and from one culture to another.

Our mission was as scouts. We were the eyes, ears, and antenna tuned to the happenings of a people trying to make a new life for themselves. No doubt some of our methods of gathering data were unorthodox, but given the time constraints, the impediments in our paths, and the lack of previously published literature in this field, we were pioneering. The time has now come to report on our findings.

CHAPTER I: THE NEW IMMIGRANTS

Immigration is the major factor in the life experiences of the Chinese in the United States. In spite of the fact that many of their ancestors came over on the China clippers more than a century and quarter ago, the Chinese are still very much a first-generation immigrant people. What happened in the interval is a little-known, shameful chapter in American history. Whereas American immigration policy is symbolized by the Lady in New York harbor with her torch held high and her arms outstretched to welcome the teeming masses of Europe, the door on the western shores was closed to peoples from Asia. Four years before the Statue of Liberty took her stand on Bedloes Island in 1886, the gates had clanged shut for the Chinese.

Perpetual Immigrants

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was the first of many subsequent laws that, over the next sixty-one years, were to deny admission to the Chinese. Some managed to sneak in and elude the immigration inspectors, but so many of these met only with hostility and discrimination that they had little desire to stay and make this country their home. They came as able-bodied men without their wives and without their families. Successive generations of Chinese continued to come, but each generation was born abroad and arrived in this country as immigrants. They were reared in a foreign land, eventually uprooted, and transplanted into a hostile climate and unreceptive soil. The history of their struggle to survive under such conditions had not been chronicled until recent years.[1]

In the mid-1940s, when the United States and China were allies-in-arms, the exclusion acts against the Chinese were repealed, but the repeal was a gesture only. The Chinese were given an annual quota of 105. For the ten-year period following repeal of the exclusion acts, only 558 Chinese were admitted to the United States under the quota. At this rate of admission, the Chinese continued to be an inconsequential and minute minority. A few special relief and refugee measures, such as the War Brides Act of 1946, the Refugee Relief Acts of 1953, 1957, and 1959, and President Kennedy's Executive Order of May 1962, enabled a few thousand more to enter the country as non-quota immigrants, but these numbers remained insignificant. It was not until the revamping of United States immigration policy in 1965, when the national origins quotas were abolished, that the demographic picture of the Chinese changed shape.[2]

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1. Betty Lee Sung, Mountain of Gold (New York: Macmillan Co., 1967) reissued as Story of the Chinese in America (New York: Collier Books, 1971).

2. Ibid. pp. 92-94

Spurt in Immigration

The pent-up longings of the Chinese for their families to join them in this country led to a phenomenal increase in immigration (see Graph A and Appendix Tables I-A and I-B). Each year, approximately 25,000 persons are admitted to the United States from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mainland China. In addition, other Chinese ethnics come from Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Cuba, South America, and other parts of the world. These people may carry a Brazilian or Indonesian passport, but they tend to identify with the Chinese communities when they arrive in the United States. Many of the Vietnamese refugees who have come to this country lately are of Chinese ethnic origin. One New York Times article estimates that up to 90 percent of a boatload of these refugees that were allowed to enter the United States are ethnic Chinese.[3] Another group that is not listed as immigrants but does swell the Chinese population is students. Each year between 7,000 and 9,000 Chinese students come to this country to study (see Appendix Table II). During their stay, they become a part of the larger Chinese community. The point is: the annual ethnic Chinese immigrant population is greater than what the official immigration figures indicate.

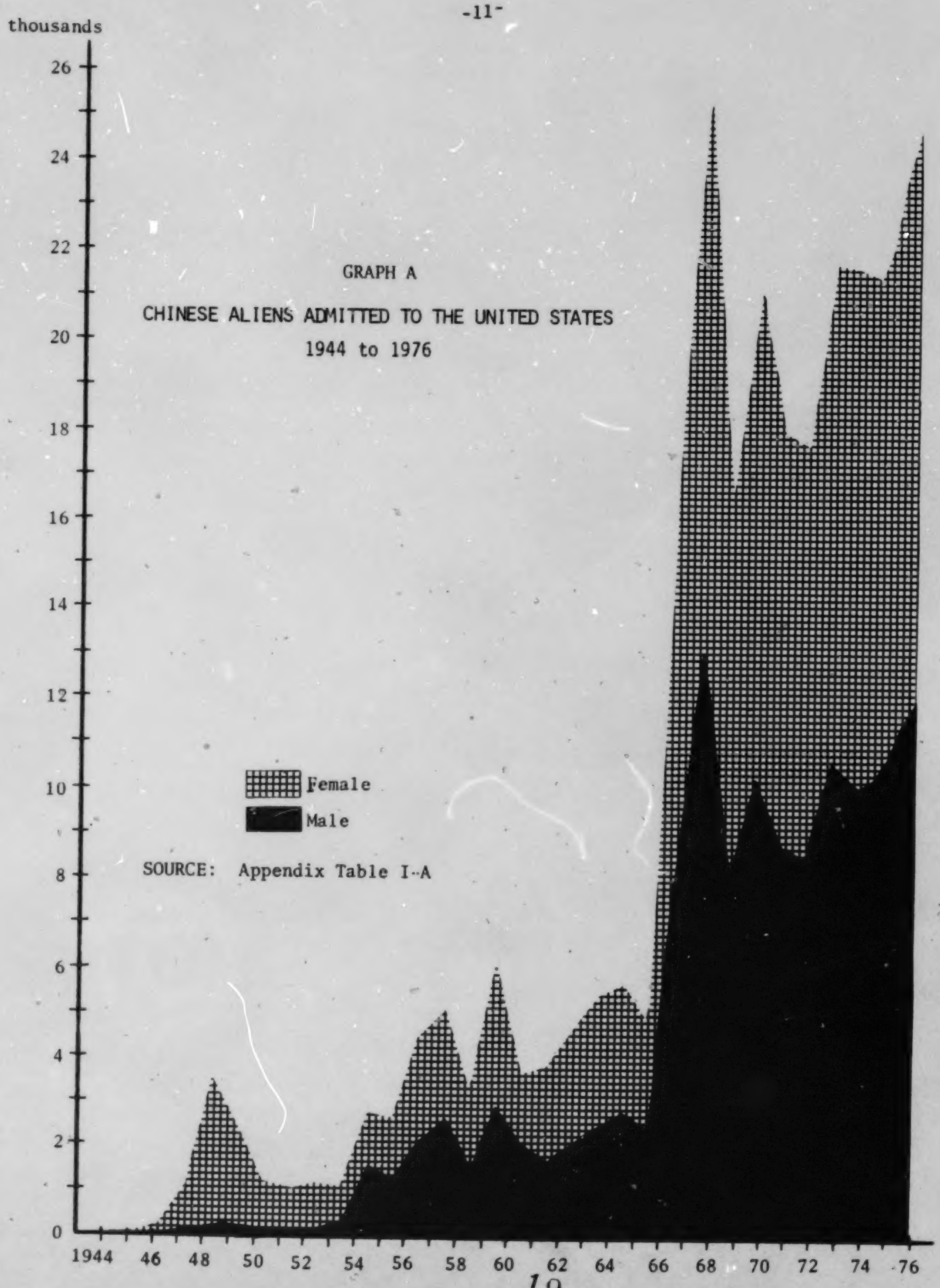
Declining Births

Births decline rapidly among the Chinese once they arrive in the United States. Table 1-2 gives the live births of the Chinese in the United States by sex for the years 1946 to 1973. Births have never exceeded 8,000 in any one year during this entire period. Another dramatic corroboration of declining births is taken from the New York City Department of Health birth files. In a city that now boasts the largest Chinese population in the country, only 1,345 babies were born to Chinese mothers in the year 1974 (see Table 1-4). With a rapidly increasing population, the city is seeing a decreasing number of Chinese babies born.[4] What conclusions do we draw

---

[3] "Carter Acts to Double Quota of Vietnamese Allowed to Enter U.S.," New York Times November 28, 1978, p. 1; Henry Kamn, "Chinese of Vietnam Driven from North," New York Times May 14, 1979, p. A5.

[4] Note that children in the upper age bracket in Table 1 are more numerous than those in the lower age bracket. This indicates that a lower birth rate may also be in evidence in Chinese families before they come to the United States. That this trend is so is documented by John Chao of the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Graph B shows the sharp plunge in crude birthrate among the Chinese in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore. These figures are significant in that they show a departure from a deeply entrenched Chinese value of wanting many sons to enhance social status, to carry on the religious practice of ancestor worship, and as insurance for the parents in old age. In other words, one of the pillars of Chinese culture is disintegrating.



GRAPH A

CHINESE ALIENS ADMITTED TO THE UNITED STATES
1944 to 1976

SOURCE: Appendix Table I-A

TABLE 1-1

CHINESE ADMITTED TO THE UNITED STATES BY SEX AND AGE GROUP UNDER 19, 1970-1976

Age Group	1970		1971		1972		1973		1974		1975		1976	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
TOTAL All Ages	8,586	9,370	8,287	9,335	10,437	11,293	9,937	11,719	10,454	11,961	11,179	12,248	11,819	12,770
Under 5	437	438	396	390	617	531	571	539	599	582	611	562	711	622
Percent	5.1	4.7	4.8	4.2	5.9	4.7	5.7	4.6	5.7	4.9	5.5	4.6	6.0	4.9
5 - 9 Years	685	636	561	509	755	734	750	660	769	741	749	653	857	836
Percent	8.0	6.8	6.8	5.5	7.2	6.5	7.6	5.6	7.4	6.2	6.7	5.3	7.3	6.5
10-19 Years	1,427	1,428	1,153	1,245	1,506	1,548	1,445	1,583	1,602	1,737	1,862	1,771	1,991	1,982
Percent	16.6	15.2	13.9	13.3	14.4	13.7	14.5	13.5	15.3	14.5	16.7	14.5	16.8	15.5
Total Under 19	2,549	2,502	2,110	2,144	2,878	2,813	2,766	2,782	2,970	3,060	3,222	2,986	3,559	3,440
Percent	29.7	26.7	25.5	23.0	27.6	24.9	27.8	23.7	28.4	25.6	28.8	24.4	30.1	27.0

SOURCE: Immigration and Naturalization Service, Annual Reports (Washington, D.C.: 1970-1976), Table 9.

TABLE 1-2

LIVE BIRTHS OF THE CHINESE IN THE U.S. BY SEX YEARS 1946-1973

Year	Male	Female	Total
1946	796	738	1,534
1947	1,093	1,077	2,170
1948	2,218	1,992	4,210
1949	2,581	2,481	5,062
1950	2,562	2,467	5,029
1951	2,560	2,310	4,870
1952	2,504	2,238	4,742
1953	2,408	2,184	4,592
1954	2,256	2,140	4,396
1955	2,252	2,177	4,429
1956	2,364	2,326	4,690
1957	2,364	2,302	4,666
1958	2,424	2,282	4,706
1959	2,614	2,410	5,024
1960	2,966	2,880	5,846
1961	3,160	3,012	6,172
1962	2,990	2,790	5,780
1963	3,198	2,850	6,048
1964	2,378	2,120	4,498
1965	3,032	2,776	5,808
1966	2,864	2,804	5,668
1967	*NA	*NA	5,798
1968	3,232	3,038	6,270
1969	3,674	3,264	6,938
1970	4,000	3,824	7,824
1971	4,110	3,818	7,928
1972	3,938	3,670	7,608
1973	3,856	3,569	7,425

*Not Available

SOURCE: _Vital Statistics of the United States, Natality_, Vol. I (Department of HEW: Washington, D.C., 1946-1973), Table 1-51.

TABLE 1-3

DEATHS OF THE CHINESE IN THE U.S. BY SEX YEARS 1946-1973

Year	Male	Female	Total
1946	1,139	140	1,279
1947	977	146	1,123
1948	1,004	158	1,162
1949	978	184	1,162
1950	888	169	1,057
1951	1,046	142	1,188
1952	1,038	168	1,206
1953	1,031	164	1,195
1954	1,102	191	1,293
1955	989	176	1,165
1956	1,088	195	1,283
1957	1,150	206	1,356
1958	1,114	221	1,335
1959	1,134	209	1,343
1960	1,328	292	1,620
1961	1,376	301	1,677
1962	1,355	319	1,674
1963	1,427	302	1,729
1964	986	319	1,305
1965	1,337	334	1,671
1966	1,331	390	1,721
1967	1,401	414	1,815
1968	1,450	461	1,911
1969	1,458	487	1,945
1970	1,511	536	2,047
1971	1,473	619	2,092
1972	1,590	640	2,230
1973	1,609	689	2,298

SOURCE: _Vital Statistics of the United States, Mortality_, Vol. II (Department of HEW: Washington, D.C., 1946-1973), Table 1-22.

TABLE 1-4

NEW YORK CITY RESIDENT BIRTHS TO CHINESE MOTHERS, BY BOROUGH, 1970-1974

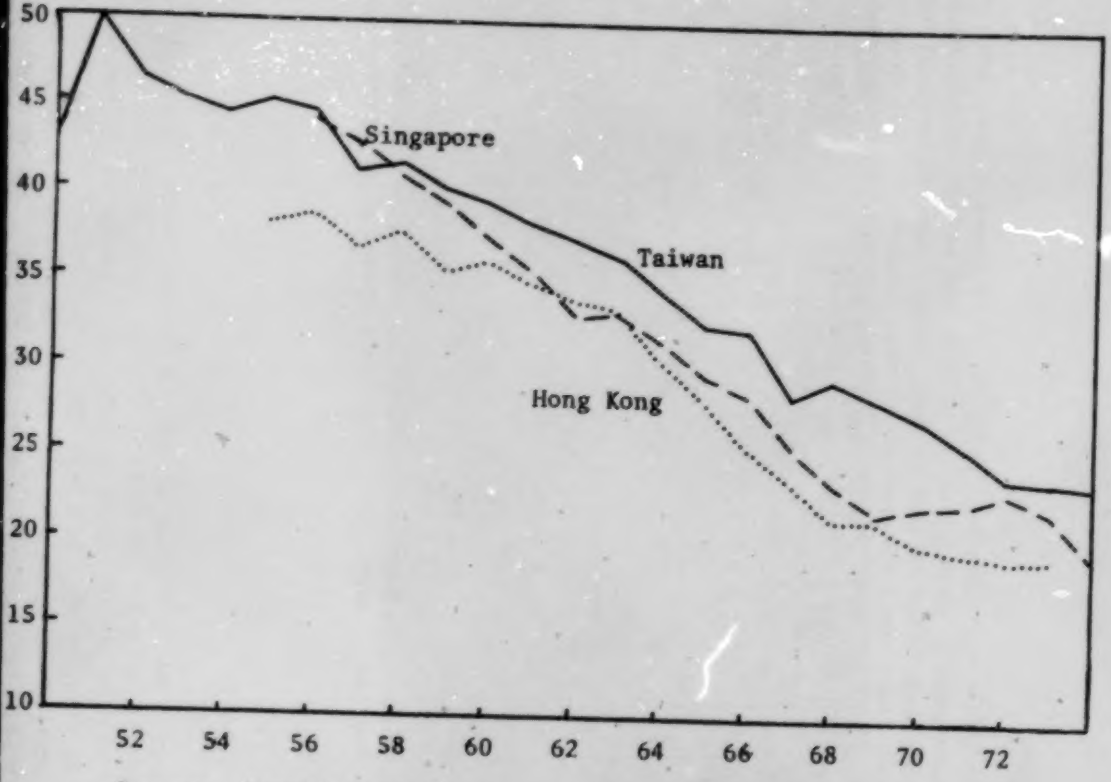
	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974
CHINESE TOTAL	**1,490**	**1,423**	**1,332**	**1,354**	**1,345**
Bronx	**135**	**133**	**117**	**84**	**85**
Brooklyn	**285**	**304**	**292**	**310**	**295**
Manhattan	**721**	**661**	**599**	**560**	**576**
Queens	**330**	**317**	**316**	**385**	**377**
Staten Island	**19**	**8**	**8**	**15**	**12**

SOURCE: **Birth Files, (New York City: Dept. of Health, 1970-74)**

NOTE: Later figures show that 1,576 babies were born to Chinese mothers in 1975; 1,596 in 1976; 1,568 in 1977; and 1,526 in 1978 for the five boroughs of New York City. No breakdowns by borough were available. The crude birthrate cannot be computed as there are no official population figures for Chinese females in New York after 1970.

GRAPH B

CRUDE BIRTHRATE OF CHINESE IN HONG KONG, TAIWAN, AND SINGAPORE
1950-1974



Source: Unpublished figures compiled by Dr. John Chao of U.S. Bureau of the Census, Suitland, Md.

from these data? They confirm our contention that growth of the Chinese population will continue to come primarily from immigration and not from natural increase and that the process of being uprooted and adjusting to a new homeland will continue to be an important factor in the life experiences of these people.[5] In 1970, 64 percent of the Chinese in New York City were foreign-born,[6] by 1980, this figure may well be over 75 percent.

Many Tongues

Since 1965, the Chinese coming to this country have been more heterogenous in terms of both place of origin and socioeconomic background, as well as the more balanced mix of men, women, and children already mentioned. At one time, over 60 percent of the Chinese in this country hailed from a single district, Toishan, and about 90 percent came from the Canton delta area. Today, the numbers coming from other sections of China have been increasing. We do not have exact figures, but we do know that the number is substantial. These immigrants generally speak the Mandarin, or the common dialect, whereas the southern Chinese usually speak Toishanese or Cantonese. Others among the many local dialects that are now frequently heard in the Chinatowns are those of Shanghai, Fukien, Amoy, Swatow, Chungshan, and Hakka. The written Chinese is the same, but the pronunciations vary according to locality, making it difficult for people from different areas to communicate with one another verbally. These differences comprise one factor inducing fissures within the larger Chinese communities that make it a less than cohesive whole.

Hong Kong is the port of embarkation for at least three-fifths of the Chinese immigrants, but less than one-fourth were born in the Crown Colony.[7] Obviously, therefore, their move to this country is a second hop. The same may be said of those Chinese immigrants from Taiwan, Southeast Asia, or South America. They, too, have been uprooted at least twice.

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[5] Even as I am trying to analyze and discern an immigration pattern of the Chinese in the United States based upon the figures for the past decade or so, drastic political changes in China may reverse the entire trend. Immigration to the United States may slacken if economic conditions and the political climate improve in China. The present Chinese leadership is now inviting Chinese-American intellectuals and scientists to return to their former homeland.

[6] Betty Lee Sung, Statistical Profiles of The Chinese in the United States, 1970 Census. (New York: Arno Press, 1978).

[7] U. S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Annual Report (Washington, D. C.: 1976).

Socioeconomic Background

There is a departure, as well, in the socioeconomic background of our newer immigrant families. Historically, the Chinese who came to the United States were of the laboring or service classes. After 1965, the largest occupational groups were professional and technical. Since 1972, another shift has taken place. Immigrants from the professional and technical groups are on the decline while the middle classes and businessmen are increasing (see Tables 1-5 and 1-6). Implication of this shift is that the Chinese population may become well balanced and occupationally dispersed rather than being as it has been, one of extremes--large numbers of professionals at one end and equally large numbers in service or factory work.

Tables 1-5 and 1-6 show us the type of work the immigrants were engaged in before they came to this country. There are no official statistics to tell us what occupations the immigrants go into after their arrival. We tabulated two different sets of data taken from the high schools that we researched; one set is given in the figures below. (This set has a larger data base. The other set will be presented in its sequence in the survey questionnaire results.)

These figures tell us that the fathers were overwhelmingly in restaurant work and the mothers were overwhelmingly in the garment factories. Occupations outside these two fields were almost nil. Only one family was on welfare, but about six percent of the fathers or mothers were not in New York at all. The median family income from this group of students ran from around \$150 to \$200 per week. Almost two-thirds of these families had been in the United States for two years or less at the time of this study.

Obviously, the family fortunes take a nose dive when the immigrants are recent arrivals. Regardless of the job the father held previously, the usual work available in this country seems to be in restaurants (see Table 10-1). The mothers who, in all likelihood, were housewives before the immigrated must now earn a living outside the home. They find ready employment in the hundreds of garment factories within the Chinatown area. Even with two parents working, the income is not enough to equip a new home, buy new belongings, but most of all to pay off the huge expenses of trans-Pacific air fare for the entire family. In the immigrant home, therefore, finances are invariably very tight.

Destination: New York

The West Coast had traditionally been the destination of Chinese immigrants to this country. Every year subsequent to 1967, however, New York City has attracted more immigrants than San Francisco/Oakland by a wide margin (see Table 1-8). That is why New York City was chosen as the target area of our study of Chinese immigrant children.

TABLE 1-5

IMMIGRANT ALIENS ADMITTED FROM CHINA* AND HONG KONG AS REGION OF BIRTH BY MAJOR OCCUPATION GROUP, 1966-1975

	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Number Admitted Total	17,608	25,096	16,434	20,893	17,956	17,622	21,730	21,656	22,685	23,427
OCCUPATION										
Professional, Technical & Kindred Workers	1,281	4,327	2,880	2,882	3,924	4,292	4,263	2,952	2,796	2,915
Farmers & Farm Managers	30	26	19	15	18	5	1	5	17	11
Managers, Officials & Proprieters	588	909	608	617	580	482	718	1,042	1,273	1,535
Clerical & Kindred Workers	627	880	584	722	700	647	863	828	1,005	1,137
Sales Workers	226	217	133	216	155	155	217	204	243	250
Craftsmen, Foremen & Kindred Workers	260	365	240	464	347	361	480	467	465	541
Operatives & Kindred Workers	1,415	1,350	631	735	619	672	1,065	967	743	822
Private Household Workers	137	266	358	542	223	129	233	141	242	127
Service Workers except Private Household	1,921	2,107	1,139	1,290	1,027	1,189	1,578	1,572	1,571	1,414
Farm Laborers & Foremen	34	30	27	18	16	16	22	13	307	145
Laborers, except Farm & Mine	89	162	110	316	179	57	151	242	319	631
Housewives, children, & Others with No Occupation or Occupation Not Reported	11,000	14,457	9,705	13,076	10,168	9,617	12,139	13,223	13,704	13,899

Source: Immigration & Naturalization Service, Annual Reports (Washington, D.C.: 1966-1975), Table 8.

*Figures reflect immigration from China (including Taiwan) and Hong Kong.

TABLE 1-6

IMMIGRANT ALIENS ADMITTED FROM CHINA* AND HONG KONG AS REGION OF BIRTH BY MAJOR OCCUPATION GROUP AND PERCENT, 1966-1975

	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Number Admitted Percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Professional, Technical & Kindred Workers	7	17	18	14	22	24	20	14	12	12
Farmers & Farm Managers	--•	--•	--•	--•	--•	--•	--•	--•	--•	--•
Mngrs., Officials & Proprieters	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	5	6	7
Clerical & Kindred Workers	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	5
Sales Workers	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Craftsmen, Foremen & Kindred Workers	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Operatives & Kindred Workers	8	5	4	4	3	4	5	4	3	4
Private Household Workers	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	1
Srvce. Wrkrs. exc. Priv. House.	11	8	7	6	6	7	7	7	7	6
Farm Laborers & Foremen	--•	--•	--•	--•	--•	--•	--•	--•	1	1
Laborers, except Farm & Mine	1	1	1	1	2	--•	1	1	1	3
Housewives, Children & Others with No Occupation or Occupation Not Reported	62	58	59	63	57	55	56	61	60	59

*Figures reflect immigration from China (including Taiwan) and Hong Kong.

•Less than one-half of one percent

Source: Table 1-5

Focal Point: Children

The above findings give us a general picture of the waves of new Chinese immigrants coming to these shores, but our specific concern is with the children. It is customary to think of children as part of the immigrant families and assume that whatever happens to parents applies to their offspring as well. Although there is a great deal of truth to this reasoning, in the United States and especially in the highly urbanized areas, children lead largely compartmentalized lives apart from those of adults. A disquieting trend seems to be that the lives of family members are no longer intertwined, but run on parallel tracks separated from one another. As this separation becomes more pronounced, it is increasingly important to examine what is happening to the children.

Let us be reminded that children were once a rarity in the Chinese communities here. These communities now have to accommodate many children coming on the scene in rapid succession (see Table 1-9). A community without children has no need for schools, playgrounds, ballparks, day-care

TABLE 1-7
OCCUPATIONS OF RECENT IMMIGRANT PARENTS, 1977

Father	Number	Mother	Number
Restaurant Worker	187	Garment Worker	237
Garment Worker	42	Housewife	53
Retailer	19	Restaurant Worker	7
Seaman	3	Nurse	1
Garage Mechanic	1	Teacher	1
Decorator	1	Office Worker	1
Hospital Worker	1	Cleaning Woman	1
Minister	1	Retailer	1
Accountant	1		
Banker	1	Away from N. Y.	26
Newspaperman	1	Died	3
Teacher	1		
Entertainer	1	Total	331
Away from N. Y.	26		
Died	13		
Welfare	1		
Unemployed	8		
Total	308		

SOURCE: Tabulation by high school guidance counselor.

NOTE: Most of these occupations represent lower-rung jobs.

TABLE 1-8

CITY OF INTENDED RESIDENCE OF CHINESE IMMIGRANTS, 1970-1976

Cities	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975*	1976*
San Francisco-Oakland	1,845	968	1,696	1,683	1,637	2,722	3,305
New York City-New Jersey	2,776	3,263	4,839	4,738	5,321	7,384	6,510
Honolulu	385	242	334	410	362	659	722
Los Angeles-Long Beach	743	802	930	914	1,286	1,406	1,210
Chicago	367	402	661	432	391	500	683
Boston-Cambridge	206	223	241	244	262	278	326
Sacramento	163	107	146	146	126	177	244
Washington D.C.-Md.-Va.	609	583	873	958	1,038	1,077	666
San Jose	64	44	62	91	102	178	245
Seattle	158	150	199	198	210	338	376
Philadelphia	99	135	184	168	148	175	221
Houston	184	106	177	212	157	192	306

NOTE: *includes immigrants from Hong Kong

SOURCE: Immigration and Naturalization Service, Annual Reports (Washington D.C.: 1970-1976), Table 12A

TABLE 1-9

CHINESE CHILDREN AND YOUTH, AGE 19 AND UNDER, IN THE U.S. BY DECADE, 1940-1970

Age Group	1940	1950	1960	1970
Under 5	4,375	13,628	27,734	35,813
5-9	5,464	6,543	27,522	39,159
10-14	6,569	7,129	22,638	39,955
15-19	7,318	8,377	11,800	43,607
Total	23,726	35,677	89,694	158,534

SOURCE: Decades 1940 and 1950 taken from Rose Hum Lee, The Chinese in the United States of America (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960) p. 43; decades 1960 and 1970 from U.S. Census Bureau, Subject Reports, PC(2)1C and PC(2)1G.

NOTE: It is estimated that total Chinese children and youth, nineteen years and under will have risen to approximately 250,000 by the year 1978.

centers, boy and girl scout troops, and the like. These facilities cannot be set up in a hurry, if indeed they can be provided at all.

Children are dependents. Someone must nurture and care for them; others must educate them. Their personalities and characters are impressionable. Their futures may be shaken or shaped by their first encounters in this country. They are confused by different standards and customs. They need someone to turn to in case of trouble.

Into what kind of situation do these youngsters find themselves when they arrive in this country? What changes must they undergo, and how much of their former lives do they hold onto? What are the processes of change, and in what aspects of life are these changes most likely to occur? Is the transition a smooth one, or is it a rough one that might have impact on the children's development?

The world of the child or teenager is his family, the school, and his neighborhood. In this study, we will probe how the immigrant child re-aligns and adjusts himself in these three areas.

Findings

1. Immigration looms large as a factor in the Chinese-American community. Each year, approximately 25,000 Chinese enter the U. S. from Hong Kong and China. This number is increased by the 7,000 to 9,000 students who may continue to stay on in this country after completing their studies and by large numbers of ethnic Chinese from other lands such as Vietnam, Southeast Asia, and Central America. All told, the Chinese population in the United States may be increasing by 30,000 to 40,000 annually.

2. Approximately 25 to 30 percent of these immigrants are under age nineteen.

3. Chinese youngsters are more apt to be immigrants than American-born because the number of Chinese-American births is extremely low.

4. Today's Chinese-American population is more heterogenous than it has been in the past in terms of place of origin, dialect spoken, and socio-economic background and is more balanced in terms of sex ratio and age groupings.

5. By far, the largest number of today's Chinese immigrants heads for New York rather than San Francisco.

6. The sudden and huge influx of such a large group of immigrants into New York calls for some hard facts upon which to make policy decisions and to deal with the drastic change.

CHAPTER II: CHINESE COMMUNITIES

To conduct our study on Chinese immigrant children, we selected two areas in the New York metropolitan area in which there are large concentrations of Chinese population. Naturally, one of these areas would be Chinatown, a distinctive ethnic enclave since the 1870s when Wo Kee opened his general store at 8 Mott Street.[1] The store was a magnet for the handful of lonely Chinese laundrymen who gathered there on Sundays to pick up their mail from home, to exchange pleasantries and small talk, to relieve their loneliness, and to wager a few bets in back of the store. Grocery stores for Chinese foods and supplies sprang up alongside of Wo Kee, and restaurants opened up to serve the men a decent meal once a week. It was not until the 1890s that Caucasians discovered the Chinese restaurants and began to patronize them. What began as a sanctuary for the Chinese became a colorful district shared with tourists, gourmets, and the curious.

Boundaries

The Chinese curio shops, groceries, and restaurants spilled over Mott Street into Pell and Doyer streets. These short, winding, narrow cobblestoned streets are still the heart of Chinatown today but the boundaries of the contiguous Chinese community on the Lower East Side have been extended. Map 1 shows the enlarged Chinatown of the early 1970s. The northern boundary is Delancey Street; the southern boundary is the Brooklyn Bridge; the eastern boundary, Essex Street; and the western boundary, Lafayette Street. The shaded area shows the core area of approximately nine blocks.

In the early 1960s the community looked as if it were heading for decline. Calvin Lee[2] predicted its demise as the old people died off and the young refused to live there. Changes in the American immigration laws quickly reversed that trend. As greater numbers of immigrants arrived, they headed toward Chinatown and caused a tremendous demand for housing. Chinatown became larger and larger. If we define Chinatown as a contiguous community with large concentrations of Chinese population, even the boundaries on the map are already outdated. The expanded borders are Fourteenth Street to the north, Broadway to the west, Columbia Street to the east, and Beekman Street to the south.

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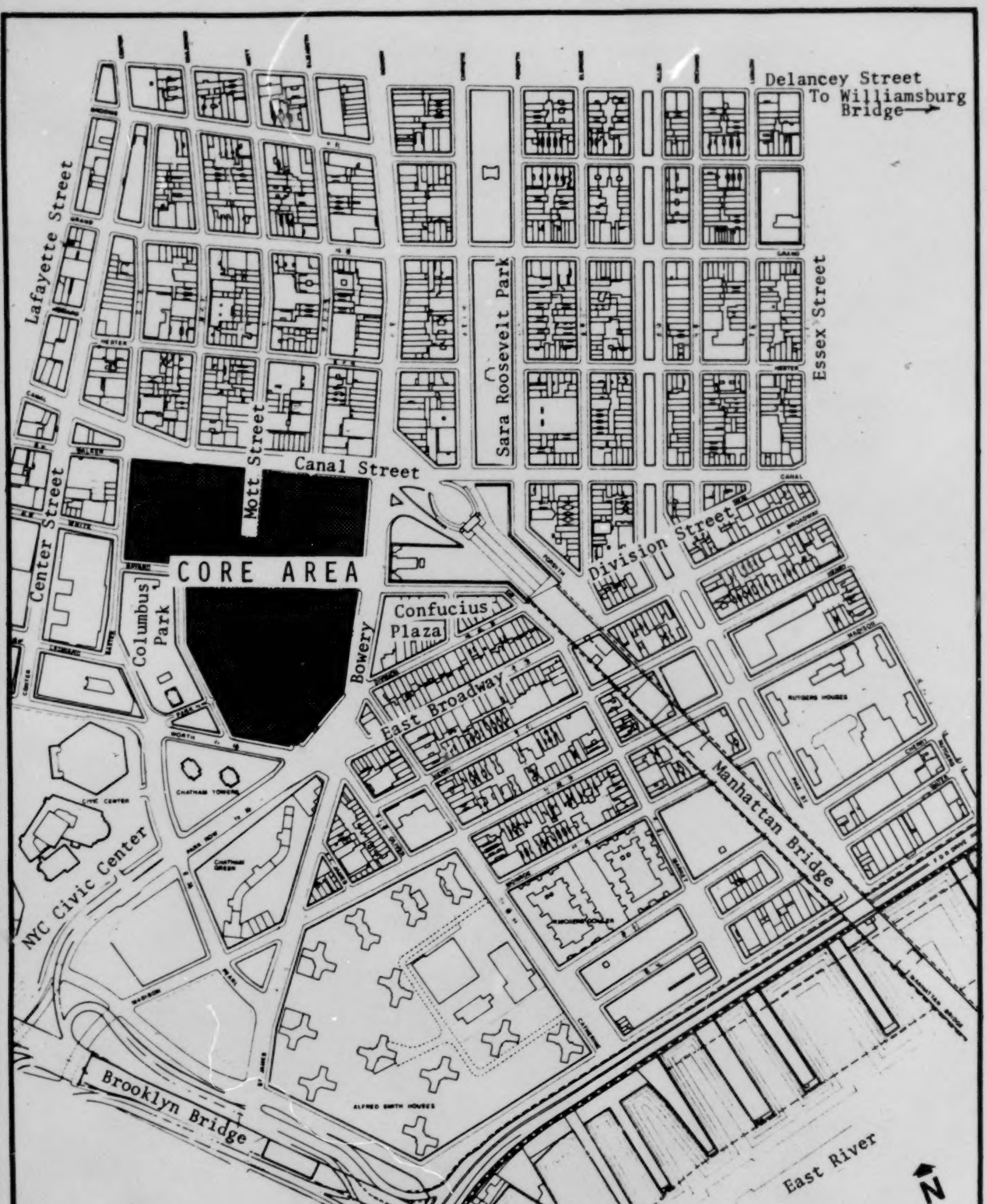
[1] Calvin Lee, Chinatown, U. S. A. (New York: Doubleday, 1965) p. 125.

[2] Ibid, p. 143.

MAP 1: CHINATOWN, NEW YORK


Delancey Street
To Williamsburg Bridge
Lafayette Street
Essex Street
Sara Roosevelt Park
Mott Street
Canal Street
Center Street
CORE AREA
Division Street
Confucius Plaza
Columbus Park
Bowery
East Broadway
Manhattan Bridge
CHATHAM TOWERS
RUTGERS HOUSES
CIVIC CENTER
NYC Civic Center
ALFRED SMITH HOUSES
Brooklyn Bridge
East River
N
CHINATOWN
NEW YORK

SOURCE: Courtesy, Basement Workshop

Housing Stock

Most of the housing in lower Manhattan is of ancient vintage. In his survey, C. N. Yung found that thirty-five percent of the buildings in the core area were built before 1900 and ninety percent before 1935.[3] New construction has been sparse. In the 1950s, when Chinatown was still confined to the nine-block area, there were plans by the New York City Housing Authority to demolish the old buildings and put up a modern, well-laid-out Chinatown in graduated stages. The plans were scuttled when a delegation went to the Housing Authority to protest any contemplated change in its community. Those who had businesses and real estate in the area did not want their vested interests disturbed, even if it meant a newer, more attractive, and cleaner neighborhood in the long run.

The housing stock of the Lower East Side into which the Chinese are moving is celebrated as a slum area that has served the wave after wave of new immigrants to these shores. There were the Irish, the Italians, the Jews, and now the Chinese and Puerto Ricans. Most of these buildings are five- to six-story walk-ups. Rentals in these buildings are controlled, the dollar amount is small, but the condition of the housing is deplorable. The landlords have found that it does not pay to fix the roof, or paint the hallways, or provide better lighting, or fix the plumbing, and, as a result, the buildings are by and large in advanced stages of disrepair.[4] Nevertheless, for the new immigrants living in or near Chinatown means that sense of security of being with one's own kind, so they compete fiercely for these rundown tenements. To take advantage of the demand, many circumvent the rent control laws by means of a convention called "key money." Key money is money paid in advance to either the landlord or the former tenant for the privilege of renting that apartment. Sums ranging from a few hundred to two thousand dollars are not uncommon, and it is money "up front," paid in advance in a lump sum. Adding on that amount of money makes the rents no longer cheap by any means.

Housing Projects

Low-cost urban renewal projects such as the Alfred Smith Houses, Knickerbocker Village, Rutgers Houses, Allen Street House, Gouverneur Gardens, and Seward Park Houses, have been put up on the outer fringes of Chinatown. These government-sponsored urban renewal projects, built largely during the 1950s and 1960s, are rent-controlled and occupied largely by the Jewish and Italian people who had prior claim to the housing at that time. Rentals of approximately twenty dollars a room make the apartments much too attractive for the occupants to move out, so that few Chinese families can get into any of these projects.

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[3] Chinatown Report (Unpublished, 1969) p. 196.

[4] The condition of some of these tenements will be described in detail in the discussion of our home visits. See also New York City Planning Commission, "Chinatown Street Revitalization," (1976) for detailed and extensive study of Chinatown housing and land use.

Middle-income housing projects like Chatham Green, Chatham Towers, and the Southbridge Towers near Beekman Street south of the Brooklyn Bridge have many Chinese tenants. These are cooperatives. The newest housing to rise in the heart of Chinatown is the forty-four-story Confucius Plaza built primarily on the airspace over the Manhattan Bridge. The project combines commercial, educational, and residential functions. On the ground level are a 1,200-pupil primary school, storefronts, offices, and a playground. The upper stories are devoted to 750 moderate-income cooperative apartments. Confucius Plaza was completed in 1976. Most of its occupants are Chinese. The impact of this project on the Chinatown community has been enormous. It has revitalized the Bowery and Division Street. It has brought many middle-income Chinese families back to the neighborhood. It has upgraded the entire locality and lead to private renovation of buildings nearby. If the city or State Housing Authority or Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) needs proof that upgrading urban areas has a domino effect, they have only to look at Confucius Plaza.

Shown within the map of Chinatown to the lower left is the Municipal Civic Center where City Hall, the Municipal Building, the courthouses, and governmental agencies are situated. Chinatown stands on prime urban real estate. Because of its rundown buildings, however, the tax base is low. All the same, abandonment of buildings and tax arrears are minimal. In fact, recent prices for sale of Chinatown property match those of midtown Manhattan: from $62 to $210 per square foot.[5] Thus, the potential growth of this area is phenomenal, given the proper attention by the city and community leaders.

Unfit for Children

As a community for children growing up, however, Chinatown lacks space, recreational facilities, playgrounds, and safe streets. The only playgrounds are those connected with the public schools. The only park to speak of is Columbus Park, an area the size of one city block and heavily used by the children and elderly as the major open-space recreational facility. Another neighborhood park, Sara Roosevelt Memorial Park, is no more than an elongated center mall of a busy city street. Ball-playing would be a hazardous game for children who might try to retrieve balls from between cars whizzing by.

The traffic is something else altogether. Canal Street is a thoroughfare for traffic leading from Brooklyn and Queens via the Manhattan Bridge to New Jersey via the Holland Tunnel. An hourly vehicle count shows that between 1,600 and 1,800 cars or trucks pass on Canal Street at an hour when children are getting out of school. Five hundred cars per hour is considered high-volume traffic. Chatham Square is another nightmare to navigate. Ten streets converge into a hub and the volume of vehicular traffic is high. Such traffic conditions are certainly not safe for children playing in the streets.

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[5] Ibid. p. 22.

Ethnic Makeup

Chinatown and its environs contain a diverse mixture of peoples. The white ethnics are the Jews and Italians, but both Little Italy on Mulberry Street and the Jewish stronghold along Delancey Street have been infused with large numbers of Chinese and Puerto Rican residents. Puerto Ricans make up the largest minority group. If we use the ethnic census of a high school as a yardstick, we can see how the neighborhood has changed within the ten-year period between 1965 and 1975. Table 2-1 below shows that the white student population dropped from 40 percent to 10 percent, the black student population dropped slightly, whereas the population of Oriental students nearly tripled and of Puerto Ricans nearly doubled.

TABLE 2-1

CHINATOWN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT POPULATION
BY ETHNIC GROUP

	1965	1970	1975
White	40%	23%	10%
Black	21	23	19
Oriental	8	14	21
Puerto Rican	27	38	45
Other Hispanic	N.A.	2	5

SOURCE: New York City Board of Education Ethnic Survey.

Of course, the ethnic makeup of a school's enrollment may not be an accurate yardstick of total population because the white ethnics in the area are generally the elderly, who have no children enrolled in school, whereas the Puerto Ricans have many children. Nevertheless, these figures give us some clue about the other groups living alongside the Chinese.

This is an area of lower- to middle-income working people. The Chinese and Puerto Ricans represent the newest wave of immigrants, and they may be classified as poor. The elderly from the former waves of immigration live on pensions or social security checks. They are also poor, but they are settled. The working people are civil servants, service workers, clericals, and laborers.

The Economy

In many ways the Chinese community has generated its own jobs. The tremendous increase in immigration has created a demand for everything not brought over in suitcases. Sales in furnishings, appliances, housewares, and clothing are brisk, and demand for services is great. Tourism is big business in Chinatown. Sightseers by the busloads descend upon the community and dash through the curio shops buying souvenirs to take home. The Chinese groceries cater to a clientele that ranges from as far away as Connecticut and New Jersey. That weekly or biweekly trip into Chinatown seems to be a must for suburban Chinese-Americans who cannot find the ingredients they need at the local supermarket. The restaurants are another magnet. Culinary delights from all regions of China are now served in the more than 260 restaurants in and around Chinatown. Nor is Chinatown without its industries. The garment industry is the biggest, and the whirr of sewing machines can be heard coming from hundreds of commercial lofts. It is said that about 70 percent of the garments sewn in New York City are sewn by Chinese seamstresses. Chinatown is an overcrowded, noisy, dirty place, but it is also a throbbing, thriving community, full of life and vitality.

Functions of Chinatown

Chinatown is not just another ethnic neighborhood with defined boundaries and distinctive architecture. It is a community of people interacting with one another. It has a history, tradition, and a social structure bound together with strong emotional and cultural ties. It has a long list of diverse functions that will perpetuate its existence. Among its functions are as a center of ethnic identity for all Chinese in the larger metropolitan area; as a marketplace; as a social gathering place; as a residence; as a place of employment; as a recreational, educational, and religious center; as an industrial area; and most unique of all, as a tourist attraction.

Ethnic Identity. New York's Chinatown not only serves those Chinese people within its own boundaries, but it attracts Chinese from the tri-state area of New York, Connecticut, and New Jersey, and also from towns up and down the East Coast. A prospective borrower at a Chinatown bank was overheard saying that he was from Miami, Florida. Asked why he did not do business with a local bank he said, "I don't know how to deal with them." It's comforting to know that there is a place where one can go to mingle with one's own people, to renew one's ethnic ties, to relieve one's "homesickness," and to be one's own self. Anyone who has traveled abroad, will recognize the feeling that although it was fun to be away, there's no place like home. Even though the place is dirty, crowded, unsafe, and not a desirable place to live in, one still gets a sense of belonging that comes with a trip to Chinatown.

Marketplace and Social Gathering Place. In southern China, few goods are bought and sold in stores. Every five days, there is a market day and people from the surrounding area bring their goods to the open marketplace to be sold. The market square is crowded and noisy with people haggling over the prices at the top of their lungs. There is jostling and pushing but also merriment and socializing. The transactions are swift. By sundown, the market square is empty.

In New York's Chinatown, market day is Sunday. Tens of thousands of Chinese swarm into the area to replenish groceries for the week, to stock up on supplies needed in their businesses, to eat in the restaurants, and, of course, to see friends or relatives, go to the movies or bookstores, visit the family association headquarters, attend a wedding, or even see the doctor. The sales volume in the exchange of goods and services is high. The Chinese reserve their shopping for Chinatown.

Residence. Many Chinatowns throughout the United States have only a few Chinese actually living within their borders. For example, less than one-tenth of Boston's Chinese live in the vicinity of its Chinatown. A smaller fraction of Washington, D.C.'s Chinese live in the one- or two-block area of Seventh and H Streets, N.W. They are widely scattered throughout the district and its suburbs. Only the Chinatowns of San Francisco and New York have heavy concentrations of Chinese actually living within their boundaries. This concentration is especially pronounced in New York, where approximately three-fourths of the Chinese in Manhattan live in a contiguous area adjacent to the core Chinatown. Therefore, Chinatown is their neighborhood, their community, and their home. And home has sentimental overtones and emotional attachments.

Educational, Recreational, and Religious Center. Mention has already been made of the movie houses, teahouses, clubs, family associations, bookstores, and restaurants that draw the Chinese to Chinatown for recreation. For those who would have their children retain their language, there are Chinese schools, and for those who need to learn English, there are English classes. Altogether, twenty Christian churches, missions, or sects hold services or meetings in Chinatown, and four Buddhist temples can be found there as well.[6] Although many among these worshipers are devout, many others utilize the churches and temples largely for social purposes, as places where members can meet in fellowship.

Place of Employment. Over 260 restaurants and 300 garment factories provide employment to thousands of men and women within the narrow confines of Chinatown. The large number of restaurants and factories indicates that they are small in size and probably operating on slim profit margins. Yet they are sources of jobs. Two other major types of small business enterprise are the grocery stores and the gift shops.

Tourist Attraction. Both the gift shops and the restaurants cater to the thousands of tourists who are drawn to a "little Cathay" in the midst of a bustling American metropolis. Each day, sightseeing buses disgorge thousands of out-of-towners who are in New York on business trips or vacations. Local New Yorkers also come regularly for the food and the exoticism. The public schools regularly schedule class trips to Chinatown. The residents of Chinatown sometimes get annoyed at being gawked at and having cameras shoved in their faces, but they also realize that the tourist dollar is an important factor in Chinatown's economy, and in the city's economy as well, for tourism is Industry Number One in New York.

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[6] Handbook for Chinese in New York, vol. III (December 1978)(in Chinese).

Factionalism

There are commonalities that bind the Chinese community together, but there are differences that divide as well. The splits are along the lines of older versus newer immigrants; American-born versus foreign-born; Cantonese-speaking versus Mandarin-speaking; the Nationalist or pro-Taiwan faction versus the pro-Communist faction; the vested interests versus the working class; the Consolidated Chinese Benevolent Association versus the Chinatown Planning Council; and the conservative reactionaries versus the radical activists.

The older immigrants had a headstart and are now comfortably ensconced in businesses and positions of influence and status in the community. In numbers they are the minority, but they call the tune while the newcomers must dance to it. The corps of newcomers is increasing so rapidly that it may dislodge the old-timers in due time.

In times past, the American-born Chinese would move out of Chinatown as soon as possible, but ethnic consciousness and ethnic pride have altered that movement somewhat. Some young American-borns are coming back into the community to live, and they want to make it a better place. They want to replace the traditional Chinese ways with the more democratic American way. They have little use for elders who do not accept change readily. The young American-borns are impatient. Most do not speak Chinese in any dialect. They feel that the traditional Chinatown organizations are not responsive to the needs of the young or the newcomer. All the same, their concerns do not dovetail with those of the newcomers. They want to oust the elders and step into the positions of authority, but they have neither the resources nor the cunning to play Chinatown politics, so invariably they are cut down to size, outsmarted, or themselves ousted.

This struggle between the young and the elders has been going on since the 1960s. At first, the frustrations of the young ran high, but as of this writing many of the younger Chinese, now in their late twenties and thirties, have managed to get into positions of responsibility and are effecting rapid changes.

The majority of the Chinese in New York speak the dialects of Toishan or Canton. Speakers of these two dialects can understand one another, but the Mandarin dialect is another story and the Mandarin-speaking person is regarded by the Cantonese and Toishanese as an outsider. In many instances, the only means of communication is English. Recently, cleavages along the lines of dialect have multiplied as people from Shanghai, Fukien, Chungshan, Hakka, and other places arrive in the community also. Those who are educated will speak a common dialect akin to the Mandarin. Fortunately, the written language is the same, so that the newspapers are written in a script common to all Chinese. But distrust and nonacceptance of the Mandarin-speaking person in Chinatown is widespread. Doing business in the community is more difficult for the Mandarin-speaker because he does not have the fraternal or family ties that help the Cantonese or Toishanese.

Chinese Politics. The most divisive issue in the Chinese community exists between the opposing camps of the pro-Nationalist, or pro-Chiang, faction of Taiwan and the pro-Mainland China faction. The pro-Mainlanders are not necessarily pro-Mao or pro-communist in sympathies, although many are, but they are more realistic than the pro-Nationalists and want to identify with a government that is growing in international stature. The pro-Nationalists are die-hard anti-communists and loyal supporters of the late Chiang Kai-shek and now his son, Chiang Ching Kuo. The overseas Chinese have traditionally supported the Nationalist party since its founding by Dr. Sun Yat Sen when he overthrew the Manchu dynasty. When the Nationalists fled to Taiwan in 1949, they came to rely heavily upon the Chinese in the United States to retain their position in the eyes of the United States government. And, reciprocally, the Chinese in the United States looked to the Nationalists as their identification with a non-communist government, particularly during the Korean War, for to do otherwise would have drawn upon them the hostility of the American people. Many Chinese during that period wore buttons that proclaimed, "I am Nationalist Chinese."

The stream of refugees that left China during the fifties and sixties continued to be strongly anti-communist; these were the people whose property had been confiscated and who were persecuted during the struggles of the "Anti" campaigns. The local villagers and cadres saw the overseas Chinese families as the propertied class, but they did not realize what sufferings these Chinese abroad had endured to be able to accumulate their savings and land. The overseas Chinese families were treated as rich landlords and made the object of attack and abuse. If the families were able to escape to Hong Kong and eventually to the United States, they joined the ranks of those who were vehemently anti-communist.

The younger students who had studied in the Hong Kong and Mainland China schools had been exposed to the progressive ideology of the Chinese communists. They came imbued with attitudes different from those of their parents, and they gravitated toward the left and identified with Mainland China. The turbulent period of the late 1960s and early 1970s brought the American-born Chinese youth back into Chinatown to rally against the Vietnam war, which they saw as a racist war against Asians.

It was during this time that emotions revolving around Chinese politics ran deepest. In Chinatown, the Nationalist faction retained absolute control. Merely to label someone as "Communist" or "leftist" was to smear his name, affect his business, and cause him to lose many friends and contacts. As a result, the circumspect Chinese tried to steer clear of Chinese politics regardless of their personal convictions, but beneath the surface these convictions ran strong. At social gatherings, when political topics surfaced, it frequently happened that the participants would in short order be shouting at the top of their lungs, friends becoming bitter enemies. Such situations became so common that in time, an unwritten covenant sprang up among the intelligentsia that the topic of Communist versus Nationalist was a taboo subject in social gatherings.

Richard Nixon's trip to China in 1973 legitimized pro-Mainland sentiments among the Chinese in the United States. They felt that if the President of the United States could reach out in a gesture of friendship with China, then it was not anti-American or subversive for them to do so as well. Even after Peking's delegation replaced that of Taiwan at the United Nations, however, the Nationalist faction in Chinatown was so strong that delegation cooks shopping for food supplies in Chinatown changed from Mao suits to western garb to avoid being identified and attacked.

Gradually the stores in Chinatown began to stock goods from the mainland, and such stores are proliferating at a fast pace. Pro-Peking organizations have sprung up, but most of the time their meetings and film showings are held on the periphery of Chinatown, not in the core area itself.

A giant step toward acceptance of the Peking government was evident during the 1978 October First celebration. Traditionally, Chinatown has celebrated October Tenth as Nationalist China's Independence Day, whereas observance of October First by pro-Peking groups always took place on the outskirts of Chinatown or on a university campus. In 1978, however, a dinner sponsored by the China-United States Friendship Association was held on October First in a restaurant whose principal stockholders have heretofore been pro-Nationalist. The 2,000 seats were sold out. In other words, the political stances are becoming less rigid but they continue to divide the community.

On December 15, 1978, in a surprise nationwide broadcast to the American people, President Jimmy Carter announced recognition by the United States of the People's Republic of China. The step ended thirty years of isolation and alienation of a nation that contains one-fourth of the world's population. It is hoped that by mutual recognition of the governments, the Chinese in the United States will no longer feel split about their ethnic loyalties.

The Power Structure: CCBA versus CPC. The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association has traditionally been held up as the governing body of New York's Chinatown. It is an apex group consisting of the representatives of sixty organizations in Chinatown, among them the family and district associations, the guilds, the tongs, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Nationalist Party. A small inner circle actually controls the organization and dictates its policies even though its chairman is elected by the member organizations for a two-year term. Members of the inner circle are the Ning Yang Association representing the majority Toishanese, the Ling Sing Association representing all non-Toishanese, On Leong Tong, Hip Sing Tong, and the Nationalist Party. The latter three are the tail that wags the dog because they control the financial resources and hold the political clout.

The CCBA enjoyed a time-honored role among the Chinese in the United States during a time when the population was small, consisting primarily of male adults and of the laboring class. But times have changed. The decisions and policies made by the CCBA reflect the interests and concerns of a group of old-timers who have vested economic interests in Chinatown, are closely aligned with Nationalist China, and are committed to the status quo. The huge influx of newcomers has a different set of concerns and needs social services for resettlement. These services used to be provided by the family or district associations, but the large numbers of new arrivals have overwhelmed the ability of these traditional organizations to handle the problem.

To cope with the tremendous need and demand for social services by the newcomers in the 1960s, a group of dedicated Chinese-American professionals--lawyers, social workers, doctors, and teachers--formed an organization called the Chinatown Planning Council (CPC) to deal with the problems as best they knew how. Instead of relying upon the monied group in the community to provide funds, they wrote proposals and applied to foundations or the government for funding. They were fairly successful in this: the CPC now operates seven day-care centers, youth services such as Project Reach, programs for the elderly, the Chinatown Health Clinic, a Manpower Training Program, employment referral services, adult education classes in English, immigrant services, and research projects. It has made a tremendous contribution to meeting the social service needs of the community. The council is run by a board of directors made up of people invited to sit on the board. Until 1978, day-to-day administration of the program was vested in the hands of an executive director, Mr. Allen Cohen, who had been at the helm of CPC almost since its inception in 1968. He brought the agency from ground zero to its present scope and size. In spite of his service and contributions, however, the fact that he is not Chinese still makes him an outsider, an ironic twist of reverse discrimination in his fight against discrimination directed toward the Chinese. In 1978, the executive directorship was split into three posts so that the CPC is now lead by a "triumvirate."

Naturally, the CCBA feels that the CPC is intruding on its domain and resents the agency's presence and successes. On the other hand, the CPC continues to snipe at the CCBA, undercut its functions, and undermine its prestige. For all its success, however, the CPC is not a governing body: it must depend for its continued operation upon outside sources which are tenuous from year to year, and it does not have the history and tradition of the CCBA. The CCBA, for its part, is hampered by heavy reliance upon the tongs and the Nationalist party for its financial support. Membership dues are minimal, and the community people are poor.

The CCBA operates the Chinese language school, which enrolls about 3,000 to 4,000 Chinese pupils who attend classes every day after American schools. The CCBA is the recipient of CETA funds for summer youth employment, and it holds adult English language classes. At one time, the CCBA scorned government grants for fear that its influence would be undermined but it has now learned to apply for these monies to enlarge its social services.

The city, state, and federal governments continue to recognize the CCBA as spokesman for the community and tend to deal with it as the recognized authority. The rivalry between the two agencies is keen, with each putting the other down. Sometimes both are losers in their bids for funding and resources allocations.

Satellite Chinatowns

The Chinatown community looks like a tightly knit group with its social institutions, highly structured organizations, geographical boundaries, businesses, industries, and strong magnetic attractions, but rapid changes are causing disorganization and reformation of institutions as well as constant movement out of the community. In their moves, the Chinese tend to regroup into what might be called "satellite" Chinatowns. There are several pockets of Chinese population in the New York metropolitan area. One of these is in upper Manhattan near Columbia University. Another is in Brooklyn in the Bensonhurst-Bay Ridge area, and two others are found in the borough of Queens.

One of these communities, indicated on Map 2 on page 37 as the shaded area, was selected for our study because it has the second highest concentration of Chinese population in the city. We chose subjects from Chinatown and from that satellite community to see if place of residence had any effect on the adjustment of immigrant children. The core area is called Elmhurst, but the Chinese have also spread into Jackson Heights and Rego Park. These so-called towns in Queens county have no distinct boundaries--they just blend into one another to form one continuous expanse. One side of the street may be Elmhurst, whereas the other side may be Jackson Heights. Flushing, the second satellite community in Queens, about four or five miles to the east, is also rapidly gaining in Chinese population, but is comprised of, in addition, diverse groups of Asian peoples from Japan, Korea, India, and Vietnam (see Map 3). Flushing has been labeled, perhaps more properly, Asian Town.

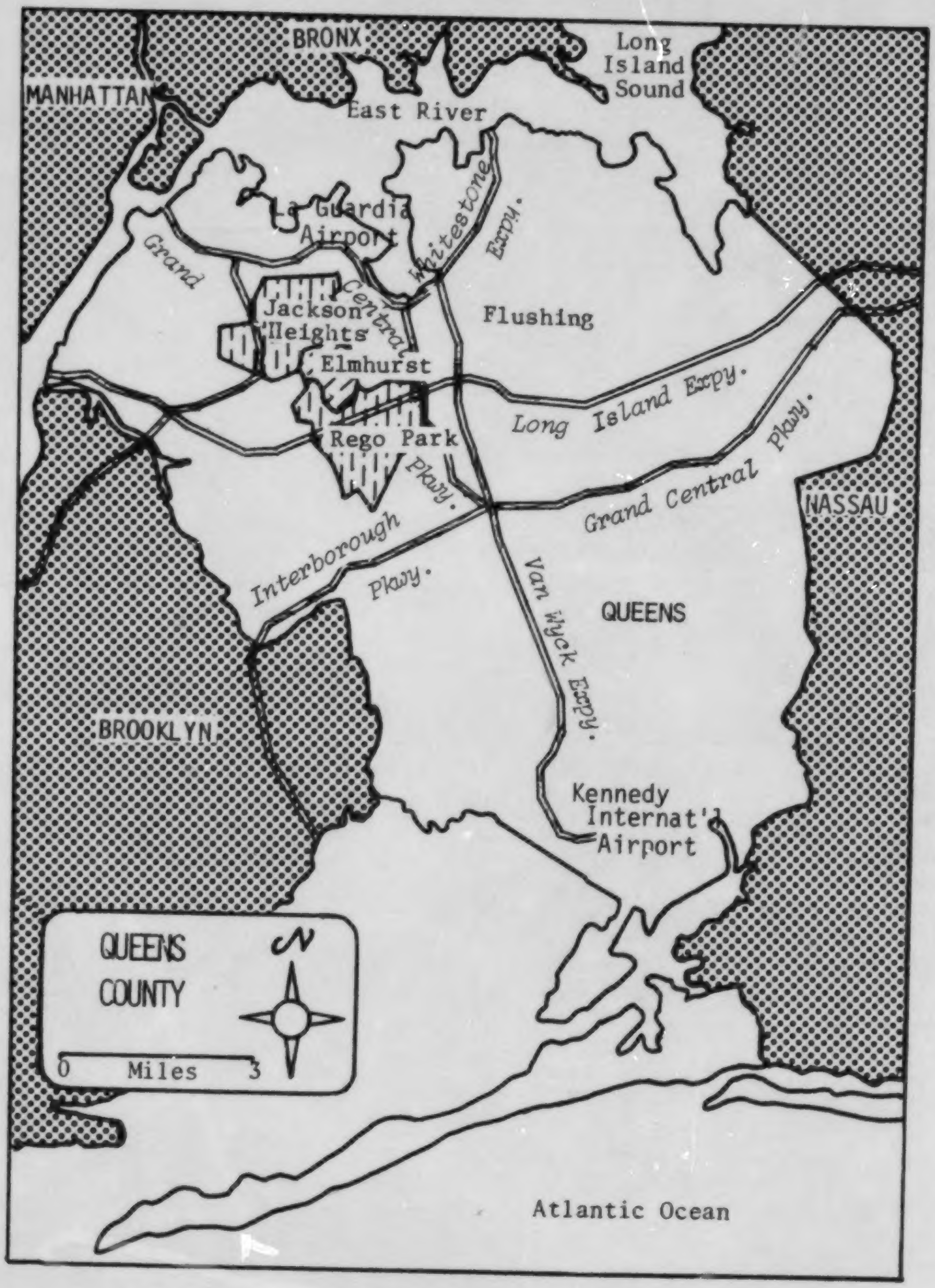
Elmhurst is reached by subway from Manhattan on the IRT line. Forty-five minutes would be sufficient to ride into Manhattan's Chinatown, and much less time is needed to get to midtown. Jackson Heights is one long stretch of high-rise apartment houses. Elmhurst is a neighborhood of one-, two-, and three-family homes. Rego Park, along the Long Island Expressway, has some private homes, but apartment houses predominate. The population of this region is extremely dense. It is a bedroom community, most of the inhabitants of which travel into Manhattan during the day and come back to sleep at night.

Home Ownership

The Chinese started moving into Elmhurst in the late 1960s. According to Mr. Howard Tom, one of the first residents to move into the neighborhood, only three or four Chinese families were around at that time. Row upon row of new two- and three-family brick homes had been built and put up for sale. The first few Chinese families spread the word to their families and friends, and the houses were snapped up quickly by other Chinese. The price at that time was about $50,000 for an attached row house with a six-room apartment on each of the upper floors and a three-room unit and garage on the ground floor. Some owners quickly converted the three-rooms to another rental unit. They would live on the second level, rent out the top and bottom units, and live practically free in a brand-new brick house.

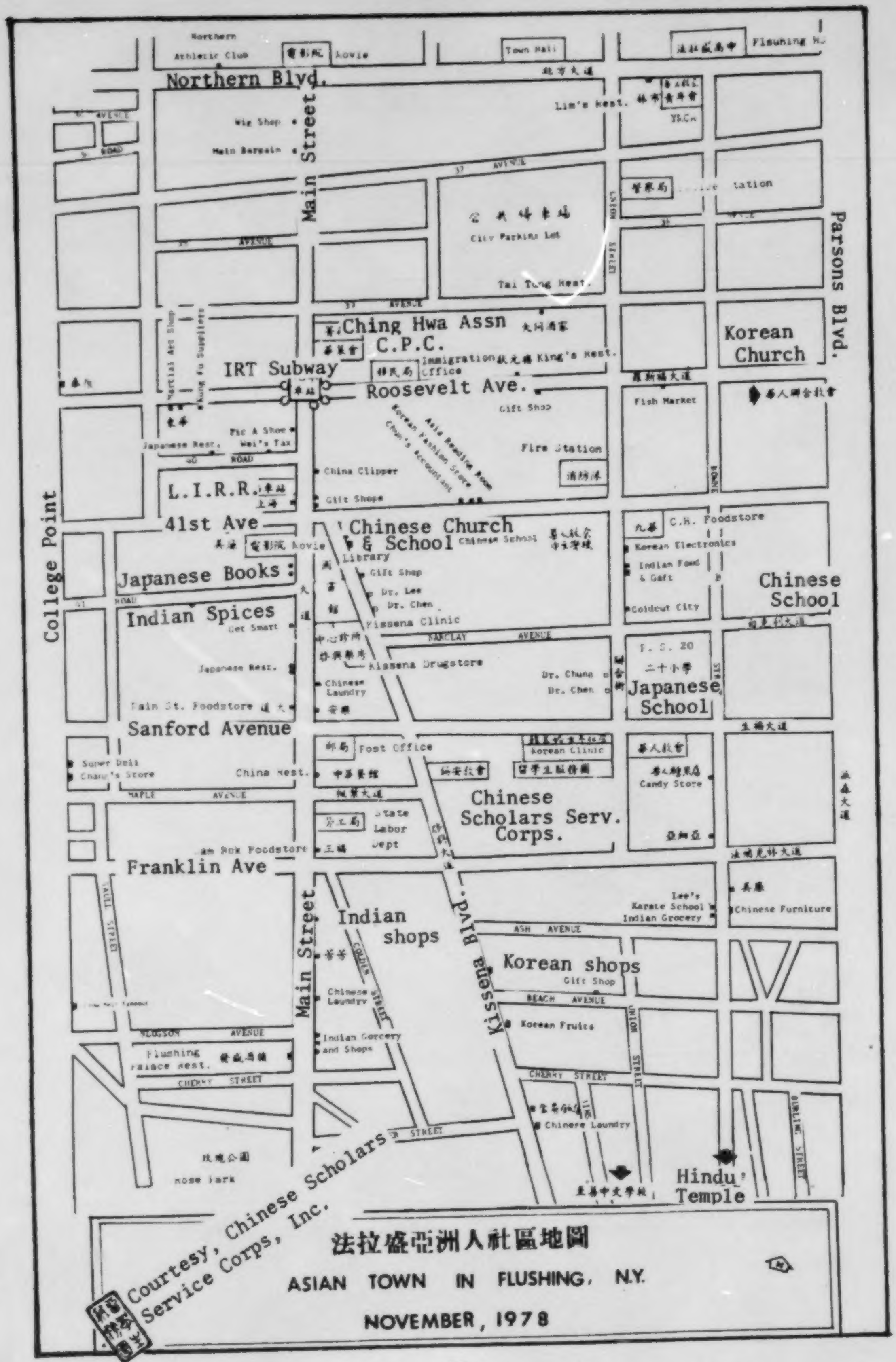
MAP 2

SATELLITE CHINATOWN IN QUEENS COUNTY, N.Y.
Elmhurst, Jackson Heights, Rego Park


BRONX
MANHATTAN
Long Island Sound
East River
La Guardia Airport
Whitestone Expy.
Grand
Central
Jackson Heights
Flushing
Elmhurst
Long Island Expy.
Rego Park
Pkwy.
Grand Central Pkwy.
NASSAU
Interborough Pkwy.
Van Wyck Expy.
QUEENS
BROOKLYN
Kennedy Internat'l Airport
QUEENS COUNTY
N
0 Miles 3
Atlantic Ocean

Map by Cynthia Sung

MAP 3


Northern Athletic Club
Movie
Town Hall
Flushing
Northern Blvd.
Main Street
Wig Shop
Main Bargain
Lim's Rest.
YMCA
37 AVENUE
Police Station
City Parking Lot
Union Street
Tai Tung Rest.
Parsons Blvd.
38 AVENUE
39 AVENUE
Martial Art Shop
Kung Fu Suppliers
Ching Hwa Assn
C.P.C.
IRT Subway
Immigration Office
King's Rest.
Korean Church
Roosevelt Ave.
Gift Shop
Fish Market
Japanese Rest.
Pic A Shoe
Wei's Tax
Asia Reading Room
Korean Fashion Store
Chun's Accountant
Fire Station
40 ROAD
L.I.R.R.
China Clipper
Gift Shops
41st Ave
Chinese Church & School
Chinese School
C.H. Foodstore
Movie
Library
Korean Electronics
Japanese Books
Gift Shop
Dr. Lee
Dr. Chen
Indian Food & Gift
Chinese School
41 ROAD
Indian Spices
Get Smart
Kissena Clinic
Coldcut City
BARCLAY AVENUE
P. S. 20
二十小學
Kissena Drugstore
Japanese Rest.
Chinese Laundry
Dr. Chung
Dr. Chen
Japanese School
Main St. Foodstore
Sanford Avenue
Post Office
Korean Clinic
Super Deli
Chang's Store
China Rest.
Candy Store
MAPLE AVENUE
Chinese Scholars Serv. Corps.
State Labor Dept
Nam Bok Foodstore
Franklin Ave
Lee's Karate School
Indian Grocery
Chinese Furniture
Indian shops
Kissena Blvd.
ASH AVENUE
Bowne Street
Korean shops
Gift Shop
Chinese Laundry
BEECH AVENUE
Korean Fruits
HOLLY AVENUE
Indian Grocery and Shops
Flushing Palace Rest.
CHERRY STREET
Chinese Laundry
Rose Park
Hindu Temple
Burling Street
College Point

法拉盛亞洲人社區地圖

ASIAN TOWN IN FLUSHING, N.Y.

NOVEMBER, 1978

Courtesy, Chinese Scholars Service Corps, Inc.

The idea appealed to the thrifty Chinese. Not only were they indulging their intense wish to own a private house, they were also living rent-free and accumulating items deductible from their income tax. In many instances, they were collecting more rent than they were paying in mortgage payments and maintenance. Moreover, they were only a one-fare subway ride from Chinatown. These very same houses have doubled in value within the last eleven to twelve years. Increasing numbers of Chinese moved into the community in a snowball effect because they felt more secure about living in a neighborhood in which lived also enough of their own kind to bolster their courage. This is a distinctive feature of Chinese mobility, whether in residence or in jobs: They tend to move in groups.

Ethnic Composition

Using as our guide the student population figures from the high school used in our study, but mindful of their limitation, the ethnic population in this satellite community breaks down as follows:

TABLE 2-2

SATELLITE CHINESE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENT POPULATION BY ETHNIC GROUP

	1971	1976
White	62%	38%
Black	9	16
Asian	3	10
Puerto Rican	2	5
Other Hispanic	23	32

SOURCE: High School Ethnic Survey.

Although the white population shrank from 62 percent to 38 percent over the five-year period, the area is still a predominantly white neighborhood. The largest increase was among Hispanics other than Puerto Ricans. These include Cubans, Dominicans, other South Americans, and Haitans. The Asians in this tabulation include increasing numbers of Koreans, Japanese, and East Indians. Although the neighborhood contains a high concentration of Chinese, they are by no means the dominant group. In fact, the area is quite cosmopolitan except for an area of about four to five blocks, within which most of the houses are Chinese-occupied. Other Chinese are not far away, and there is the convenience of Chinese grocery stores. Two Christian churches with Chinese congregations of 200 to 300 are well established in the neighborhood, more as a social than a religious magnet.

Being a community of mostly private homes and family dwellings, the environs are more appropriate to rearing children than is the urban setting of Chinatown. There are front and backyards in the homes and most of the streets are lined with trees and shrubs. Although people are stacked on top of one another in the high-rise apartment houses, the feeling of congestion is not as intense as that in Manhattan's Chinatown. And, of course, the traffic volume is much, much lower, and playing in the streets or on the sidewalks is safe for the children.

The Elmhurst-Jackson Heights-Rego Park community is primarily a residential neighborhood for the large numbers of Chinese who live there. The only telltale signs of its Chinese population are the few grocery stores that sell Chinese foodstuff along Broadway and the many Chinese faces near the subway station. There is no distinctive architecture. There is no social structure nor are there any institutions to give the community cohesion. Certainly there are no tourists nor large numbers of outsiders who visit for purposes of recreation or education. The two churches, however, do draw Chinese worshipers from other parts of Queens county.

Our research shows that the Elmhurst residents fall into three main categories: American-born Chinese, old-timers who have the financial resources and the courage to move away from Chinatown; and newcomers with higher educational and socioeconomic backgrounds than those who settled in Chinatown. In general, the newcomers tend not to be Cantonese; they come mostly from Taiwan and speak Mandarin with some basic knowledge of English. They are better off financially than those heading for Chinatown, having migrated with some money. Home ownership requires a large initial down payment, and rentals in the high-rise apartments are more expensive than are those in Chinatown. It is important to keep in mind the higher socioeconomic background of the satellite community residents in comparative analysis of the data.

The Dispersed

Let us not forget those Chinese who are scattered throughout the metropolitan area; their ranks are large. One could say that a little less than half of the Chinese population is concentrated in the two Chinese communities we have focused upon, but the others are found in every school district in the city,[7] not to mention the large numbers in the adjacent counties to the east and north of the city as well as those across the Hudson River in New Jersey.

Housing discrimination against the Chinese in New York is seldom encountered or at least has been reported rarely since the 1960s. The dispersed Chinese have little or no difficulty with the English language and American customs. They live like most New Yorkers do, each within the walls of his own family abode with little social interaction between neighbors or local residents. The ties are between family members and other Chinese friends; the nearest relative or friend may be miles away, but contact is maintained by cars and the telephone. Social get-togethers are held in Chinatown or in private homes. The majority of Chinese associate with other Chinese, but the distance between the dispersed does pose a problem. These people lack communal ties and sometimes find fellowship and ethnic identity in cultural clubs. As a rule, those who are dispersed are not the new immigrants. The newcomers still seek emotional and physical security within the confines of a Chinatown or satellite Chinatown.

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[7] See Map 4 and Tables 3-2 to 3-5.

Aims

We have described the communities used in our study in great detail as regards the racial mix, the physical environs and conditions, the community organizations and structure, and the interpersonal factors that separate and bind the people together. One aspect we wanted to see was if there are differences in the process and rate of adjustment between immigrant children residing in Chinatown and those living in a satellite Chinese community. Does the child learn English faster in the latter? Are there any differences in life-style between the two? Is the child in the satellite community more alienated from his ethnic group than is his Manhattan counterpart? How many newcomers are bypassing Chinatown and going directly into satellite Chinese communities? Does the community into which the immigrant child goes have any impact on his well-being and rate of adjustment? These are some of the questions that we will attempt to address.

Findings

1. Historically, residential segregation forced the Chinese into ghettos called Chinatowns. At the same time, the Chinese have tended to cluster in ethnic communities wherever they have migrated. These communities serve vital functions in easing the transition of the immigrants into a new land.

2. The sizable and rapid increase of Chinese immigrants to New York has placed great strains upon Chinatown's ability to absorb newcomers without drastically revising its institutions and structure. Such realignment has caused stress and strain and division within the community along the lines of traditionalist versus modernist, American-born versus foreign-born, Cantonese-speaking versus Mandarin-speaking, vested interest versus working class, pro-Peking faction versus pro-Taiwan faction, and the Chinese Benevolent Association versus the Chinatown Planning Council.

3. Satellite Chinatowns have begun to spin off, but such satellites have taken on features different from those of the parent community. For example, those immigrants who went directly into a satellite Chinatown in the Queens area come from a different socioeconomic or regional background than the residents of Manhattan's Chinatown.

4. Although there are population clusters of Chinese, others are widely dispersed. These others, added up, are greater in numbers than those found in Chinatowns, but scattered or concentrated there is a bond, based upon ethnicity, that weaves the Chinese into an identifiable network.

5. This study has taken subjects from the parent Chinatown and the Queens satellite community in an attempt to note the discernable differences between the two and to see how this affects immigrant adaptation.

CHAPTER III: SCHOOL PROFILES AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Frustration is a continual experience for the researcher attempting to consult official statistics on Asian-Americans. Most of the time, data by race is given for "Blacks," "Whites," and "Others," the Chinese and other Asians being subsumed under the last category. A more specific breakdown is difficult to come by unless one does a special tabulation, an expensive and time-consuming prospect, or goes back to the original collection source to try to piece together the data. There are no demographic data from the census on the Chinese population in New York City since 1970. Current Population Survey did not include Asians in its sample until 1978, and the sample is, in any case, too small to be meaningful at the moment. No specialized survey has been undertaken, and even the special dress-rehearsal census conducted in Lower Manhattan in the spring of 1979, which might have provided more up-to-date information about the Chinese, will again give figures for the two major racial groups plus that catchall, "Others."

In the absence of reliable demographic data other than educated guesses, a fairly dependable guide could be gleaned from the ethnic census of student enrollment in the city's public schools. Since the New York City Board of Education is centralized and has collected ethnic statistics since 1970, this source of information was tapped, aggregated, and tabulated.

Oriental Students in New York City Schools

Table 3-1 shows Oriental children[1] enrolled in New York City schools from 1970 to 1976. No breakdown for the Chinese was available except for the one school year 1973-1974. The figures for that year revealed that the Chinese are still the largest Asian group in the city. The extent to which they are the majority in New York City can be assumed from the 1970 census, in which the Chinese were roughly five-sixths or 70,000 of the 95,000 Asian population.[2]

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[1] There was no consistent use of the terms "Oriental" and "Asian-American" by the schools and the Board of Education. They seemed to be used interchangeably.

[2] U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population, New York State, 1970 (PC) 1 B34.

TABLE 3-1

ORIENTAL CHILDREN ENROLLED IN NEW YORK CITY SCHOOLS, 1970-1976

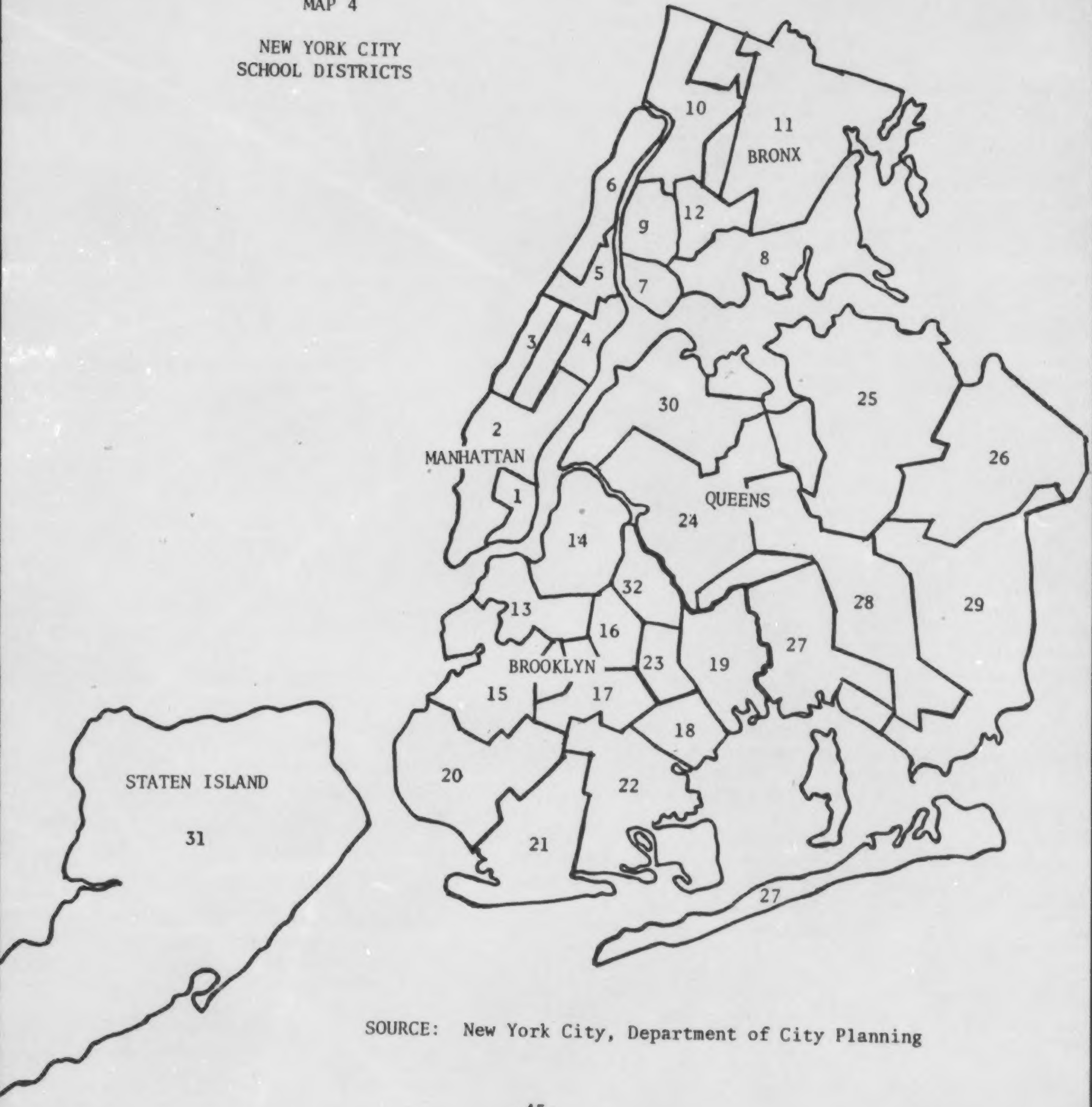
	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
MANHATTAN	7,828	8,155	8,361	8,594	8,595	8,375	8,859
Elementary	4,419	4,552	4,489	4,496	4,462	4,371	4,743
JHS/Interm.	1,755	1,785	1,889	1,923	1,875	1,968	2,068
Academic Hi	1,460	1,597	1,758	1,917	1,944	1,749	1,792
Vocational	194	221	225	258	314	287	256
BRONX	1,615	1,821	1,999	2,076	2,015	1,863	2,181
Elementary	922	1,038	1,140	1,177	1,157	973	1,180
JHS/Interm.	307	346	414	421	380	339	369
Academic Hi	374	424	431	463	468	541	623
Vocational	12	13	14	15	10	10	9
BROOKLYN	3,430	3,767	4,202	4,587	5,012	5,335	5,640
Elementary	1,725	1,825	1,932	2,102	2,256	2,362	2,552
JHS/Interm.	634	664	805	880	921	965	990
Academic Hi	913	1,120	1,328	1,474	1,652	1,726	1,846
Vocational	158	158	137	131	183	282	252
QUEENS	4,351	4,829	5,485	6,311	7,065	7,714	9,483
Elementary	2,717	2,982	3,326	3,732	4,130	4,408	5,713
JHS/Interm.	800	850	1,054	1,234	1,504	1,609	1,993
Academic Hi	754	889	985	1,196	1,268	1,516	1,598
Vocational	80	108	120	149	163	181	179
STATEN ISLAND	245	321	360	464	518	580	761
Elementary	162	218	240	314	325	390	497
JHS/Interm.	32	53	56	85	92	103	127
Academic Hi	49	49	59	60	83	70	113
Vocational	2	1	5	5	18	17	24
CITY WIDE TOTAL	17,491	18,931	20,452	22,067	23,252	23,757	26,256

NOTE: Totals include some students assigned to special schools

SOURCE: New York City Board of Education, Annual Pupil Ethnic Census, Tables 4 and 5

MAP 4

NEW YORK CITY
SCHOOL DISTRICTS


10
11
BRONX
6
12
9
8
5
7
3
4
30
25
2
MANHATTAN
26
1
QUEENS
24
14
32
13
28
29
16
27
BROOKLYN
23
19
15
17
18
20
STATEN ISLAND
22
31
21
27

SOURCE: New York City, Department of City Planning

New Asian immigrant groups like the Koreans, Vietnamese, Filipinos, and East Indians presently contribute large numbers to the Asian population, so that the designation "Oriental" or "Asian" can no longer be assumed largely to represent the Chinese alone. The figures can, however, give us a close approximation of the number of Chinese in New York City.

According to the 1970 census, the ratio of total Oriental population in New York City to Oriental children eighteen years and under for each of the four boroughs of Brooklyn, Queens, Bronx, and Staten Island was approximately 5:1. For the borough of Manhattan alone, it was approximately 6:1. Using the same ratios, one can project the Oriental population of the city for 1976 by multiplying the student enrollment figures for that year for the four boroughs by five and for Manhattan alone by six and adding the two products together. Roughly, this figure comes to 142,000. If the Chinese are about five-sixths of the total, then the Chinese population should be about 117,000. One must keep in mind that this estimate pertains to the five boroughs of the city proper alone. There has been a pronounced movement among the Chinese to the suburbs, and the New York metropolitan statistical area Chinese population could well approximate 200,000. Considering that the 1970 census counted only about 70,000 Chinese in the City of New York at that time, the increase within the span of six years is a fairly substantial one.

Population Distribution

Student enrollment figures not only tell us how many children are in school, they also reveal the population distribution pattern. Note that the Oriental school population in Manhattan borough seems to have hit a plateau; it has not increased to any extent over the seven-year period (see Table 3-1). The Bronx also has been static, while the other boroughs have doubled their Chinese population since 1970. Queens seems to be the favorite abode, and its total student population (9,483) now exceeds that of Manhattan (8,859).

An even more detailed breakdown,--Oriental students enrolled by school districts--is given in Tables 3-2 through 3-5. Map 4 shows the school districts. By matching enrollment figures with the districts, one can obtain a fairly good picture of Chinese population concentration and dispersion. From Table 3-2, we can see that the heaviest concentration in Manhattan is in District 2, which is located in Chinatown.

In Queens, the Oriental population seems to be fairly well dispersed. There is little antagonism in any neighborhood to Chinese families. As one New York City Planning Commission member remarked, "Chinese tenants are considered desirable tenants." Even though Queens has no heavy concentration such as that found in Manhattan, an area bounded by adjoining school districts 24 and 25 is known as one of New York's satellite Chinatowns. This region, where our satellite school studies were targeted, is marked by the shaded area on Map 2, page 37 and comprises the communities of Elmhurst, Jackson Heights, and Rego Park. Although moving to Elmhurst may be considered going to the suburbs, it does not mean total separation

TABLE 3-2

ORIENTAL PUPILS ENROLLED IN MANHATTAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY LEVEL, 1970-1976

District & Level	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
DISTRICT 1	899	955	924	979	931	931	880
Elementary	502	555	540	567	547	547	511
JHS/Interm.	397	400	384	412	384	384	369
Acad. Hi & Voc.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DISTRICT 2	6,092	6,342	6,600	6,803	6,868	6,669	7,054
Elementary	3,386	3,435	3,435	3,432	3,410	3,330	3,638
JHS/Interm.	1,233	1,249	1,363	1,367	1,357	1,446	1,520
Acad. Hi & Voc.	1,473	1,658	1,802	2,004	2,101	1,893	1,896
DISTRICT 3	308	318	344	292	315	298	377
Elementary	202	210	216	193	202	195	238
JHS/Interm.	47	60	70	50	63	45	77
Acad. Hi & Voc.	59	48	58	49	50	58	62
DISTRICT 4	95	77	81	68	47	70	56
Elementary	65	60	45	38	38	42	36
JHS/Interm.	10	12	9	9	9	28	20
Acad. Hi & Voc.	20	5	27	21	0	0	0
DISTRICT 5	65	70	57	69	62	56	56
Elementary	46	52	42	47	52	48	50
JHS/Interm.	19	18	15	22	10	8	6
Acad. Hi & Voc.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DISTRICT 6	369	393	355	383	372	351	436
Elementary	218	240	211	219	213	209	270
JHS/Interm.	49	46	48	63	52	57	76
Acad. Hi & Voc.	102	107	96	101	107	85	90
MANHATTAN TOTAL	7,828	8,155	8,361	8,594	8,595	8,375	8,859

SOURCE: New York City Board of Education, Annual Pupil Ethnic Census, Tables 7

TABLE 3-3

ORIENTAL PUPILS ENROLLED IN BRONX SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY LEVEL, 1970-1976

District & Level	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
DISTRICT 7	40	49	46	37	45	27	38
Elementary	22	31	29	13	27	12	18
JHS/Interm.	9	8	8	14	9	5	12
Acad. Hi & Voc.	9	10	9	10	9	10	8
DISTRICT 8	146	165	146	164	152	126	157
Elementary	91	105	81	98	83	80	93
JHS/Interm.	45	36	43	43	45	31	49
Acad. Hi & Voc.	10	24	22	23	24	15	15
DISTRICT 9	232	261	327	305	298	261	368
Elementary	142	167	209	202	183	158	200
JHS/Interm.	59	54	74	63	72	71	102
Acad. Hi & Voc.	31	40	44	40	43	32	66
DISTRICT 10	899	1,014	1,153	1,184	1,196	1,200	1,303
Elementary	492	551	637	653	681	616	695
JHS/Interm.	138	180	218	220	210	188	179
Acad. Hi & Voc.	269	283	298	311	305	396	429
DISTRICT 11	198	223	246	303	258	190	253
Elementary	105	121	130	154	138	66	126
JHS/Interm.	48	59	65	77	40	34	18
Acad. Hi & Voc.	45	43	51	72	80	90	109
DISTRICT 12	100	109	81	83	66	59	62
Elementary	70	63	54	57	45	41	48
JHS/Interm.	8	9	6	4	4	10	9
Acad. Hi & Voc.	22	37	21	22	17	8	5
BRONX TOTAL	1,615	1,821	1,999	2,076	2,015	1,863	2,181

SOURCE: New York City, Board of Education, Annual Pupil Ethnic Census, Tables 7

TABLE 3-4

ORIENTAL PUPILS ENROLLED IN BROOKLYN SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY LEVEL, 1970-1976

District & Level	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
DISTRICT 13	500	615	703	786	913	977	969
Elementary	77	68	65	62	53	50	76
JHS/Interm.	13	18	16	15	16	8	22
Acad. Hi & Voc.	410	529	622	709	844	919	871
DISTRICT 14	195	207	234	271	263	311	282
Elementary	115	115	142	152	140	186	172
JHS/Interm.	47	49	50	54	68	57	54
Acad. Hi & Voc.	33	43	42	65	55	68	56
DISTRICT 15	350	406	377	373	379	397	506
Elementary	209	257	210	230	249	265	356
JHS/Interm.	79	81	92	92	79	68	69
Acad. Hi & Voc.	62	68	75	51	51	64	81
DISTRICT 16	33	40	52	2	4	3	7
Elementary	28	32	44	2	3	3	7
JHS/Interm.	5	8	8	0	1	0	0
Acad. Hi & Voc.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DISTRICT 17	579	580	640	NA	688	654	743
Elementary	304	297	303	NA	338	308	350
JHS/Interm.	89	101	130	NA	109	92	125
Acad. Hi & Voc.	186	182	207	193	241	254	268
DISTRICT 18	200	214	241	NA	318	307	375
Elementary	106	127	127	NA	153	150	194
JHS/Interm.	52	40	53	NA	56	64	72
Acad. Hi & Voc.	42	47	61	80	109	93	109
DISTRICT 19	134	140	159	34	143	148	187
Elementary	65	62	60	NA	61	63	94
JHS/Interm.	34	33	44	NA	38	52	40
Acad. Hi & Voc.	35	45	55	34	44	33	53

Continued on next page

ORIENTAL PUPILS ENROLLED IN BROOKLYN SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY LEVEL, 1970-1976

(Continued)

District & Level	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
DISTRICT 20	610	661	784	NA	990	1,155	1,216
Elementary	318	328	370	NA	462	525	598
JHS/Interm.	158	168	221	NA	315	354	354
Acad. Hi & Voc.	134	165	193	242	213	276	264
DISTRICT 21	343	377	443	506	562	633	481
Elementary	209	223	261	305	319	344	184
JHS/Interm.	72	67	82	99	110	133	87
Acad. Hi & Voc.	62	87	100	102	133	156	210
DISTRICT 22	465	499	537	621	697	680	786
Elementary	283	305	336	388	441	408	456
JHS/Interm.	83	95	104	110	113	130	154
Acad. Hi & Voc.	99	99	97	123	143	142	176
DISTRICT 23	13	15	19	13	4	10	19
Elementary	11	11	14	12	2	9	14
JHS/Interm.	2	4	5	1	2	1	5
Acad. Hi & Voc.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DISTRICT 32	NA	NA	NA	71	51	60	69
Elementary	NA	NA	NA	48	35	51	51
JHS/Interm.	NA	NA	NA	17	14	6	8
Acad. Hi & Voc.	8	13	13	6	2	3	10
BROOKLYN TOTAL	3,430	3,767	4,202	4,587	5,012	5,335	5,640

NOTE: NA--Not Available

SOURCE: New York City Board of Education, Annual Pupil Ethnic Census,
Tables 7 or 8

TABLE 3-5

ORIENTAL PUPILS ENROLLED IN QUEENS AND STATEN ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY LEVEL, 1970-1976

District & Level	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
DISTRICT 24	910	1,080	1,303	1,548	1,792	1,953	2,505
Elementary	498	592	677	771	856	889	1,230
JHS/Interm.	197	216	295	373	524	448	616
Acad. Hi & Voc.	215	272	331	404	412	586	659
DISTRICT 25	1,022	1,147	1,322	1,412	1,680	1,876	2,108
Elementary	736	749	871	917	1,120	1,235	1,501
JHS/Interm.	212	232	237	267	309	354	439
Acad. Hi & Voc.	74	166	214	228	251	287	168
DISTRICT 26	293	351	417	507	610	666	832
Elementary	171	192	213	278	356	390	489
JHS/Interm.	54	55	84	84	104	104	142
Acad. Hi & Voc.	68	104	120	145	150	172	201
DISTRICT 27	194	174	201	231	274	353	453
Elementary	98	115	110	127	157	208	269
JHS/Interm.	32	25	43	49	47	55	80
Acad. Hi & Voc.	64	34	48	55	70	90	104
DISTRICT 28	857	968	985	1,178	1,197	1,207	1,538
Elementary	570	650	651	736	723	671	912
JHS/Interm.	132	133	153	168	190	232	287
Acad. Hi & Voc.	155	185	181	274	284	304	339
DISTRICT 29	286	250	280	303	275	290	402
Elementary	164	181	179	180	165	198	262
JHS/Interm.	20	21	54	77	59	77	103
Acad. Hi & Voc.	102	48	47	46	51	15	37
DISTRICT 30	789	859	977	1,132	1,237	1,369	1,645
Elementary	480	503	625	723	753	817	1,050
JHS/Interm.	153	168	188	216	271	309	326
Acad. Hi & Voc.	156	188	164	193	213	243	269
QUEENS TOTAL	4,351	4,829	5,485	6,311	7,065	7,714	9,483
STATEN ISLAND TOTAL	490	642	721	928	1,036	1,160	1,522
DISTRICT 31	245	321	361	464	518	580	761
Elementary	162	218	240	314	325	390	497
JHS/Interm.	32	53	56	85	92	103	127
Acad. Hi & Voc.	51	50	64	65	101	87	137

SOURCE: New York City Board of Education, Annual Pupil Ethnic Census, Tables 7 or 8 from an ethnic community. Residents in this area tend to have a greater need for proximity with other Chinese people.

For obvious reasons, our research was started in selected schools with large but not overwhelmingly Chinese enrollments. Consequently, schools closer to the core Chinatown were not chosen. In accordance with a condition imposed upon us by the Board of Education, none of the schools is identified by name or number. Our subjects were from six schools, one each at the elementary, junior high, and high school levels from the Chinatown region and from the satellite Chinatown in Queens.

Chinatown Elementary School

The Chinatown elementary school is housed in a building sixty years old. It has seen many pupils from other ethnic groups sitting at its desks in years gone by. The school fronts directly on the street, and the so-called playground measures about thirty feet square. School capacity is 1,100, but enrollment exceeds that. Although most schools in New York City have seen a decline in enrollment in recent years, those receiving Asian or Caribbean immigrants are exceptions to that trend. In this school, the Chinese made up about three-fourths of the school population at the time of our study. The ethnic breakdown was about 4 percent blacks, 14 percent Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics, and 7 to 8 percent whites.[3] In School District 2, the area in which this school is located, white families tend to send their children to private schools.[4]

Of the Chinese-speaking children in the school, about one-third were fluent in English, one-third were hesitant, and one-third spoke English poorly. The reading scores of the total student population were somewhat below grade and the math scores were on grade. Daily attendance was above 92 percent.[5]

In spite of the preponderance of Chinese children in the student body, only six teachers of the fifty or so were of Chinese extraction. The principal, a non-Chinese, and his staff, however, were very much a part of the Chinese community. The principal in particular showed up at most Chinese functions. In conversation with the teachers in all the Chinatown schools, I found that each and every one of them regarded his or her assignment as a "plum." A Chinatown position is, as one teacher phrased it, "Teacher's Heaven." Reason: The children are well-behaved and discipline is not much of a problem.

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[3] White in ethnic enumerations generally refers to non-Hispanic whites.

[4] New York City Planning Commission. "Community School District Profiles," July 1974.

[5] New York City Board of Education, "Community School Profiles, 1973-1974.

Satellite Community Elementary School

The satellite community elementary school was built about fifty years ago. A new wing was added in 1966, however, giving the school as a whole a more modern appearance. School enrollment at the time of our study was also about 1,100, the same as that of the paired school in Chinatown. Again, enrollment exceeded capacity, and daily attendance was over 90 percent. Of the Chinese-speaking students, 62 percent spoke fluent English, 26 percent spoke hesitantly, and 12 percent spoke poorly. Both reading and math scores of the total student population were on or slightly above grade.[6]

In 1976, Oriental students made up 20 percent of the student enrollment, blacks were about 15 percent, Puerto Ricans 9 percent, other Hispanics 22 percent, and whites 34 percent.[7] The population within this school district is heavily Catholic; 46 percent of the whites living there send their children to parochial schools.[8] The white population of this elementary school fell from 57 percent in 1972 to 34 percent in 1976, while the minority population increased. Currently, the school is ethnically "balanced;" although, Oriental students are substantial in number, they do not form the majority as they do in its Chinatown counterpart. No teacher of Chinese descent was on the staff of this school.

Chinatown Junior High School

The Chinatown junior high was built around the turn of the century, again pointing to the much more antiquated facilities of the school buildings in and around Chinatown. Enrollment outstripped capacity to such a degree that an old school building eight blocks away was called back into service as an annex to house the seventh graders. The total enrollment in both school buildings was 1,600, with the Chinese accounting for 1,100 of that number.

At the time of our study, the ethnic composition of this junior high was 70 percent Oriental, 5 percent black, 18 percent Puerto Rican, 5 percent other Hispanic, and 3 percent white. It is obvious that the Chinese were the majority group in this school, and this school is the focal point for many Chinese teenage activities.

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6. Ibid. p. 24-2.

7. Ibid.

8. "Community School District Profiles." Op cit.

We had decided to study the seventh graders, but the very fact that the entire seventh grade was physically separated from the rest of the school by eight blocks made the findings from our study less than representative and reflective of what is happening to students thirteen to fourteen years of age. After our observations and interviews had been completed, we realized that we should have used the eighth graders housed in the main building as the subjects of our study. By then it was not feasible for us to switch, but the lesson learned was a valuable one. The reasons why will be pointed out in a later chapter.

Of the Chinese-speaking students, 70 percent were rated fluent in English, 24 percent hesitant, and only 6 percent poor.[9] These figures are open to question since the reading scores for that same year were 1½ to 2½ grades below normal and math scores were only slightly below grade level.[10] Attendance at this Chinatown junior high was above 90 percent. In general, schools with a large Chinese student population have a high attendance record.

At the time of our observation, there were seven teachers of Chinese ancestry on the annex staff. The two previous years had seen a drastic citywide cutback in school personnel due to budget problems, and since the Chinese teachers were among the last hired, they were the first to go. Both the principal and the assistant principal who ran the seventh grade annex were long-time residents of the Lower East Side. They were non-Chinese but intimately acquainted with the neighborhood and its problems, and they were involved in Chinatown community affairs as well.

Satellite Community Junior High School

The paired junior high school in Queens saw its Oriental student population rise from 3 percent in 1971 to 12 percent in 1976. Its black and Puerto Rican enrollment remained steady at 12 percent and 3 percent respectively, but its other Hispanic group rose from 20 to 27 percent. The proportion of white students declined from 64 percent in 1971 to 46 percent in 1976, but it is still a predominantly white school.

The school was built more than fifty years ago, making it at least twenty years newer than its Chinatown counterpart. The Queens junior high is located in the midst of a neighborhood of small, one-family homes of lower middle-class working people. The school yard is quite large, and during lunch hours and recess the children have ample opportunity to run and play and work off their excess energy.

The capacity of the school is 1,600, but in 1976 actual enrollment exceeded 2,000. Attendance was 88 percent, slightly lower than for the

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[9] "Community School Profiles," Op. cit. p. 2-25.

[10] Ibid.

Chinatown school. Oriental students numbered 248 in 1976, but Asian groups other than Chinese--namely Koreans,Japanese, and some East Indians--made up 40 percent of the total. Chinese students numbered approximately 150, more than half of whom were American-born. This left approximately 70 foreign-born Chinese who were recent immigrants. The ethnic variety and preponderance of American-born schoolmates of the Chinese immigrant students at this school provides a different social setting from that of the Chinatown junior high, where an overwhelming number are Chinese immigrants like themselves.

The proficiency rating in English of the Chinese-speaking students showed that 62 percent were fluent, 19 percent were hesitant, and the remaining 19 percent poor. Reading and math scores were on grade level.[11] Again, the English fluency ratings are questionable; they are lower than those for the Chinatown junior high even though a greater number of students in the satellite community school are American-born.

Chinatown High School

The high school serving most of the Chinese students is on the outer fringes of Chinatown and is located in the heart of a community rapidly changing from Jewish to Chinese and Puerto Rican. The latter now make up about 45 percent of the student enrollment. Whites are about 10 percent, a drastic drop from 40 percent ten years ago. Blacks remain at a steady 20 percent, while Orientals have increased from 8 percent in 1965 to 22 percent in 1976. Approximately 900 Chinese students attended this high school in 1976, although the figures declined significantly for the first time in 1977, perhaps indicating a trend toward a move away from Chinatown.

Student capacity at this high school is 2,500, but its current enrollment is 3,800--extremely overcrowded, to say the least. A number of annexes take care of some of the overflow, but all of the Chinese students in the bilingual program are housed in the main building. The attendance rate for the entire school is low--65 percent at the time of our study--and the dropout rate is disproportionately high at 45 percent.[12] Of the Chinese-speaking students, about 45 percent spoke English fluently, 41 percent spoke hesitantly, and 13 percent spoke poorly.[13]

Considering the age (it was built in the 1930s) and location of the school, its physical condition was good. There was little evidence of vandalism. There is, however, no school yard for recreation, and eight security guards patrol the grounds continually.

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11. *Ibid*. p. 24-21.

12. *Ibid*. p. 78-3.

13. *Ibid*.

Satellite Community High School

The satellite community high school selected for our study was also overcrowded, to the extent that it had to have two end-to-end sessions per day. School capacity was 3,600, but enrollment exceeded 5,200. The first session started at 7:30 in the morning and ended at 11:30; the second session started at noon and ended at 4:00. There was no lunch period. The percentage of white students has been steadily shrinking from 62 percent in 1971 to 38 percent in 1976, while the Oriental percentage rose from 3 percent to 10 percent over the same period (see Table 2-2). Blacks were 16 percent, Puerto Ricans 5 percent, other Hispanics 32 percent,and Orientals 10 percent in 1976. The neighborhood has a heterogenous population of middle-class commuters who work in New York City.

Attendance rate exceeded 80 percent and the dropout rate was less than 25 percent, which is quite an improvement over the Chinatown high school rates. Of the Chinese-speaking students, 80 percent were rated fluent in English, 17 percent hesitant, and 3 percent poor.[14]

The school was built in 1922, but modernized in 1954. It was well-maintained and employed five security guards.

Conclusion

The physical plant of all six of the schools selected for our study of their Chinese immigrant children were quite old although well-maintained. All six schools were more than overcrowded and located in changing neighborhoods where the white majority population was decreasing rapidly. Class size was enormous, yet to this observer's eyes the schools were well run by men and women dedicated to the task of educating the children.

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[14] Ibid. p. 78-3.

Findings

1. In the absence of reliable demographic data on the Chinese in New York since the 1970 census, the ethnic statistics of the New York City school system were utilized to provide some indicator of the rapidly growing Oriental population in the city's five boroughs.

2. Projection of the data show that there were approximately 117,000 Chinese within the city limits in 1976. For the larger metropolitan statistical area, the Chinese population is probably around 200,000.

3. The borough of Queens is gaining the largest number of Chinese inhabitants while Manhattan's growth is leveling off.

4. Clusters of Chinese population are found in School District 2 in Manhattan, location of the parent Chinatown, and in School Districts 24 and 25 in Queens, location of the satellite Chinatown. In actual count, a larger number of Chinese are widely dispersed throughout the city. By following the school enrollment pattern by school district, one can derive a fairly reliable picture of the settlement pattern of the Chinese in New York City.

5. The schools selected for this study mirror the neighborhoods in which their students live. All of the schools showed declining white populations and increasing Oriental and Hispanic populations. These are the two newest waves of immigrants.

6. All of the schools are antiquated and overcrowded. The 1973 Board of Education figures do provide a detailed breakdown for the Chinese in terms of their English-speaking ability. Other pertinent data, such as attendance and dropout rates and English and math scores for the school as a whole, were also available from this source.

7. In spite of similarities in the school profiles, schools in Manhattan differ from those in Queens primarily in ethnic makeup and in the ratio of American-born to foreign-born Chinese. Whether these two factors have any effect on the rate and process of adjustment for the Chinese immigrant students bears watching in our research.

CHAPTER IV: SCHOOL RECORD

A tall, blonde male teacher saw me in the teachers' room at the Chinatown junior high, of which about seventy percent of the student body is Chinese. His face was one broad grin as he introduced himself. "You're writing about Chinese students, aren't you?" he asked. "I must tell you how happy I am to be teaching at this school. This transfer has revived my interest in teaching. I was just about to throw in the towel."

"Why? Where did you teach before?" I inquired. He mentioned a school in an upper middle-class, predominantly white neighborhood. Involuntarily, my face registered surprise.

"Yes," he reiterated, "discipline there was a constant hassle. A Chinatown appointment is teacher's heaven."

Respect for the Teacher

When I approached another teacher, a nineteen-year veteran of the New York City schools, he could not stop raving. "The Chinese children are fantastic," he said. "The parents must have done their homework. They have dignity, sportsmanship. They don't want to get into trouble. They have respect for the teacher, and they fear any loss of face. I taught fifteen years elsewhere before coming here, but I really didn't teach at all. It was enough just to keep discipline and get through the day. It was very discouraging."

At both the Queens junior high and high school, the same sort of remarks were made by teachers about their Chinese pupils. Without exception, the teachers were full of praise. At the Office of the Dean of Boys at the Queens junior high, an endless stream of students flowed in and out, but rarely was a Chinese student sent there for discipline.

This positive image of the Chinese student may be a stereotype, but it is, nonetheless, a tremendous advantage enjoyed by the Chinese children. Both teachers and administrators were favorably disposed toward the Chinese pupils. The teachers expected the Chinese students to perform well, and psychological tests have shown that high teacher expectations generally result in high student performance.[1]

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1. Rosenthal, R. and L. Jacobson. "Teacher Expectation for the Disadvantaged," Scientific American, Vol. 218, April 1968 pp. 19-23.

In the schools that we visited, most had high minority enrollment. The administrators mentioned that they were particularly happy that the Chinese students helped them maintain a high attendance rate and good scholastic standing.

The positive student-teacher interaction is also built upon the traditional respect accorded the scholar and teacher in Chinese culture. The children try to please the teachers, who are looked upon as authority figures second only to the parents. The role of the teacher is an exalted one. The parents as well as the children look up to the teacher in his or her role as dispenser of knowledge and wisdom and molder of character. No doubt this respect on the part of the students for the teachers results in a better teaching climate.

Non-Questioning Attitude

This awe and respect for the teachers, however, have their side-effects. The students tend to accept without question what the teachers say. This tendency is due in part to the Chinese system of education, in which learning is largely by rote, and in part because the students do not feel that it is proper to challenge the teacher. The inability of the students to express themselves well in English, is yet another factor, but the cultural influence--respect for the teacher--is the stronger factor.

Many teachers are happy about how well-behaved Chinese children are, but at the same time they are critical of the reluctance of the same children to speak up in class.

> It is very hard to get them to participate in class. Even when they volunteer to answer questions of fact, they are hesitant about expressing an opinion. Some just won't open their mouths at all. The only way that I know they are learning the subject or are doing well is in a written exam.

Comments like that were very common among the teachers I spoke with. Coming from an educational system that does not invite the open expression of student opinions, the children will need time before they learn that it is all right, and even expected of them, to speak up. Meanwhile, their marks may be downgraded because of lack of participation in class.

In our classroom observations, we noted that nonparticipation in high school classes was much more noticeable than in the lower grades. In the elementary grades, the Chinese children were quite animated and waved their hands impatiently, waiting to be recognized by their teachers. Even at the seventh grade level, the students were not inhibited in answering questions put to them by the teacher. They would answer when called upon, but did not volunteer much.

The respect for the teacher as a revered authority is so ingrained that it was difficult for the immigrant children to countenance the misbehavior toward the teachers of some of their non-Chinese classmates. In interviews with the children, many asked why their classmates were so disrespectful and why the teachers tolerated the lack of discipline in the classroom. It was bewildering and disgusting to them that some children walked around the classroom while the teacher was talking, threw things across the room, made funny noises, erased what the teacher had put on the blackboard, and generally behaved in such a disrupting manner. Whenever asked about what they didn't like about school, a common reply was along the lines of: "Some bad classmates are always making disturbances so that we can't learn very well in class."

Too Much Freedom Is No Freedom

When asked if the students enjoyed the more permissive atmosphere of American schools, some of the students replied in ways surprising to me. Many did not know how to handle their newfound freedom. Accustomed to a highly structured schedule and classroom situation, they felt more comfortable when roles and behavior were well-defined. One girl made a very profound remark: "Too much freedom is no freedom." She went on to explain her seemingly contradictory statement by saying, "We are constantly asked to make decisions. Where would you like to go? What do you want to do? Which one do you want? What do you think? I don't know what to do. It is so hard to make decisions. I'm not used to it. I even find it painful, so I end up doing nothing."

If teachers were to recognize that Chinese immigrant children do come from a school situation and home environment that is more structured, less egalitarian, and more authoritative than that of their fellow students, they might be better able to help the Chinese student make choices and explore options. It would also be helpful if the classroom environment were more structured until the immigrant children become accustomed to a more relaxed atmosphere.

Teacher Criticisms

The warm, supportive attitude of the teachers is oftentimes counterbalanced by their critical attitudes toward the cultural traits of the children or the behavior of the children's parents. Examples of the criticisms heard from teachers are:

1. The children act like little adults.

2. The children don't fight back even when they are hit and abused. They just stand there and take it.

3. The mothers are overprotective. They bring their children to school and pick them up. At lunchtime, many mothers even bring food to school and feed their children.

4. It is very difficult to organize Chinese parents for any advocacy

action. Very few show up for open school meetings with the teacher. The ones who do show up are usually American-born parents.

5. The parents do not allow their children to go anywhere after school. They must go straight home or to the factories where the mothers work.

6. The children work too many hours in the factories or the stores. They come to school very tired.

7. The parents do not keep their children at home even when they are sick. If the school wants to send the sick child home, the child prefers to stay in school because there is no one home.

8. If a Chinese child gets sick, the parents do not take him to a Western doctor. They cook up a herbal brew for the child or they rub him with some Chinese ointment. They also pinch him on the neck until he is red and blue because they believe this relieves his fever and cures him. Some of us teachers used to think that the child was being abused.

9. The Chinese parents must learn to be less autocratic and less absolute in their authority over the children. This is America, not China!

10. The parents discourage their children from playing or interacting with children of other ethnic groups. They are very clannish.

Satisfaction with School Work

A questionnaire was administered to the students in the bilingual programs in the two high schools. The findings from this survey will be discussed at length in later chapters, but it is useful to look now at the response elicited by one of the questions: Are you satisfied with your school work? Three-fifths of those replying said yes, two-fifths said no (see Table 11-3). As for the reasons why, many checked that the teachers were nice, they were grateful for a free education, and that they felt they were learning a great deal. The unfavorable comments were fewer. The leading reasons for dissatisfaction with school work was their poor English and lack of order in the classroom.

At the elementary and seventh grade levels, most of the teachers interviewed felt that a year or two at the most were all that was required for a student without any English background to function adequately. A separate chapter is devoted to the discussion of how immigrant children are taught the English language in school; this chapter will deal only with school work in general.

It's Easy in Comparison

The academic record of the recent Chinese immigrant children at the lower grade levels (specifically the third, fifth, and seventh grades) was maintained at a fairly high level in spite of difficulty with the language. Several factors may account for this. Of course, the warm and supportive teacher-pupil relationship is one factor. Another is that the Chinese students come from an educational system that is competitive to the utmost. Both in Hong Kong and Taiwan, school is a grinding if not grueling ordeal, yet school is the number one ranking priority in the lives of parents who want their children to be upwardly mobile.

Until recent years, free schooling was available to all Hong Kong children only up to the sixth grade. Within the last few years, this has been extended through junior high. The ninth grade limit exists also in Taiwan. At every grade level, the student must pass examinations if he is to be promoted or retained in school. Some schools will allow a student who has failed to repeat the grade, but others will simply drop him. At the end of the sixth grade, the student must pass the Secondary School Entrance Examination. Failure to pass this examination means he cannot get placement in any school. Students with the highest scores get into the choice schools like the government subsidized public schools. Tuition is cheaper than in nonsubsidized schools and the high reputation of the school is maintained by selecting only the best students. In order to help the students survive this rigorous elimination system, the teachers cram a great deal of subject matter into their courses. They assign a heavy homework load, and the exams are very difficult. In a sense, the exams are a weeding out process; there are simply not enough schools to accommodate everyone who wants to attend.

If the student cannot keep up with the work in school, he tries to catch up by diligence at home. Parents try to help the student with his homework, but if they cannot they will make every effort to hire a tutor for the child. The student may go to school from 8:45 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., Monday through Friday and half days on Saturdays. He may spend the good portion of the day remaining doing his homework or being tutored. The Chinese immigrant child is accustomed to a rigorous school program.

When he comes to New York City, he may think school is a "breeze." Homework can be done in a half hour to two hours at the most. Since he is habituated to exerting himself more, he will spend the extra time memorizing his math theorems or lists of spelling words. He will spend the extra hour rereading his assignment. In terms of the requirements of his work here, the Chinese student is outstandingly diligent, and the results will show up as academic achievement.

A number of the third, fifth, and seventh grade students to whom I talked mentioned that school was too easy; they were eager to learn more, and they indicated that they would not mind having more advanced work or being asked to do a little more homework. When questioned about whether they preferred the demanding and competitive atmosphere of Hong Kong or Taiwan, however, not one spoke in favor of it. Even college students who had succeeded in the system, had been admitted to choice schools, and had gone on to the more prestigious institutions of higher learning condemned the system as "man-eating." Parents would prod their children and, if a child did not pass the examinations, would consider that a disgrace to the family name and a dashing of their hopes for the child's future. The pressures on the children were so great that suicides were fairly common among those who failed their examinations. Small wonder that the immigrant children found the workload in America light in comparison; they remarked that, in contrast, promotion was almost routine, that one did not have to fight to stay in school, that one's parents did not have to sacrifice and work hard to pay the tuition, and that family name and honor were easier to uphold. Overwhelmingly, the students were grateful for the chance to obtain their education free.

Academic Record--Junior High Schools

What did we find regarding the academic record of the immigrant children? The elementary schools do not grade the children if they are new immigrants until a comfortable period of time has elapsed. At the two junior highs that we studied and observed, the immigrant children take the same subjects as the rest of the student body. The curriculum includes English, math, science, gym, industrial arts or home economics, and science lab. Usually social studies is deferred to allow class time for English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Study of a foreign language like Spanish or French may also be postponed until the immigrant child is more proficient in English.

To the question why the child who is struggling to learn English must also grapple with Spanish or French, the answer is that the student who intends to apply to college must fulfill the foreign language requirements. To the question why Chinese is not accepted as a foreign language, the answer is a shrug of the shoulders or the explanation that only two or three high schools offer Chinese as a foreign language and a continuity must exist between foreign language taken in junior high and that taken in high school. In this instance, the immigrant children labor under a greater handicap than the American-born pupils.

In spite of the language disadvantage, the teachers were pleased by what the children actually achieve. Here are some observations from teachers I spoke to:

> Sometimes I feel so sorry for these children when they first come here. I don't know what it would be like for me to be in another country, at my age even.... I don't know whether I can handle it.... So I'm amazed at what these kids do. Perhaps they are young and learn easily. At the beginning they get marks like fifty or forty, but within the year they seem to be functioning adequately.
>
> I teach science, but I don't give them a mark in science. I was told that at this point it is not that important for them to keep up with the science class. They are here mostly to learn English, so they just get a grade from the ESL teacher.
>
> How long does it take for an immigrant to be able to function adequately in English? I'd say several years, assuming they

TABLE 4-1

MARKS OF FOREIGN-BORN CHINESE SEVENTH GRADERS SATELLITE COMMUNITY JUNIOR HIGH, 1977

Student	Yrs. in U.S.	Engl.	Soc St	Math	Sci	Lang	Read Score	Math Score
1	1	ESL	85	-	-	50	-	-
2	2	60	75	75	85	-	-	-
3	3	85	91	90	90	95	6.7	-
4	3	90	92	92	85	92	7.7	-
5	3	70	75	95	80	-	6.4	5.3
6	3	75	75	90	80	60	-	-
7	4	85	85	99	80	75	6.8	-
8	4	85	75	90	90	91	8.2	-
9	4	80	85	93	70	90	5.7	-
10	4	85	85	80	80	85	8.7	8.5
11	4	90	98	98	96	92	6.7	6.2
12	5	60	80	90	80	75	-	-
13	5	90	90	98	99	-	9.0	9.5
14	6	75	80	80	80	60	7.8	5.4
15	7	75	75	85	85	75	7.1	-
16	7	80	80	90	80	65	-	-
17	8	65	85	93	75	70	6.2	7.0
18	8	85	80	90	90	80	9.0	-
19	8	90	75	80	-	95	10.5	8.5
20	8	90	85	85	85	90	10.0	7.5
21	10	90	85	85	85	90	9.0	8.2
22	na	85	85	90	80	85	-	-
23	na	80	80	80	80	55	-	-
24	na	98	98	85	98	65	-	-

Source: Satellite junior high school

Note: Foreign-born Chinese students in the satellite junior high have been in this country much longer than those in the Chinatown junior high.

TABLE 4-2

MARKS OF RECENT IMMIGRANT CHINESE CHILDREN IN THE SEVENTH GRADE CHINATOWN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Class Level Student Number	Engl.	Soc.St.	Math	Sci.	ESL
Orientation					
1	90	*	98	85	90
2	75	*	85	80	75
3	75	*	70	70	70
4	75	*	55	65	65
5	85	*	80	75	85
6	75	*	65	65	70
7	70	*	55	70	70
Orientation/Transition					
1	85	90	85	95	
2	85	90	90	95	
3	90	90	93	95	
4	65	80	75	65	
5	65	80	75	65	
Transition					
1	65	65	50	65	
2	75	85	90	85	
3	85	85	90	85	
4	85	85	85	85	

SOURCE: Students selected for interviews

NOTE: None of above students had been in the United States for more than two years.
*Social studies omitted until students had time to learn some English.

> didn't know any English. The brighter children pick it up more quickly, whereas I noticed that some of the slower children are frustrated in trying to learn, and if they don't pick it up soon they get turned off totally . . . .
>
> I want you to meet my star pupil, JCC. He's only been in this country for six months, but he gets 98 or 100 in every test that I have given the class. I'm so proud of him.

The teacher in this instance taught math. To see how JCC was making out in a class other than math, I went to observe him in his ESL class. The ESL class was very small, about twelve students grouped around a teacher who drilled the students orally in spoken English. JCC raised his hand frequently to volunteer the answer. His pronunciation was good considering his short stay in the country. In conversation with the teacher after class, I inquired whether JCC had already outgrown the beginning ESL class. She felt that JCC needed to build up his vocabulary more before moving on, although she felt that he was making good progress.

I was not permitted to look at individual student records, but at the Queens junior high I was given a sheet listing the grades and attendance and length of stay of all the seventh grade students (without names) who were Chinese immigrants. The list is reproduced in Table 4-1, which gives a complete picture for this school of the recent seventh grade Chinese immigrants.

A similar list for the Chinatown junior high school was not available. Only a few recent arrivals to this school were selected for interviews; their marks are tabulated in Table 4-2. Children in the orientation class were the newest arrivals. Each progressed at his own pace in the ESL classes, and when each felt comfortable enough to move on, he entered the orientation/transition classes and later the transition class. None of the students listed in Table 4-2 had been in the United States for more than two years. The academic record of these students as a group is noteworthy. It indicates individual differences in accomplishment rather than a pattern of difficulty with the school work. The majority of the children interviewed said that they did not understand much of what the teacher was saying, but they did not think the school work was hard.

High School

How about the high school level? At first, we planned to use only the tenth grade students as our subjects, but when we looked at the setup of the Chinatown high school, we found that it was possible to include the eleventh and twelfth grade students as well because their records were located in the same bilingual program office. It would have been more difficult to try to separate the tenth grade students from the entire group of recent immigrant Chinese youths than to include them all. In addition, the larger group gave us a broader sample upon which to base our findings.

A jump from the seventh grade to the tenth grade or above revealed wide differences in the marks and the achievements of the immigrant youths. The age of the students ranged from fifteen to twenty years and over. In New York, the students are placed in a homeroom class by chronological age, not by the number of years of schooling they have had. In Hong Kong and Taiwan, children do not necessarily start the first grade at six years of age and advance one grade with each year of chronological age. A child may start first grade at ten years of age, so that by sixteen he will have only completed the sixth grade. Yet, if he comes to this country, he will be put in the tenth grade with other sixteen-year-olds. Table 4-3 shows the level of education of students from our sample survey before they immigrated. They were all in the tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grades at the time of our survey.

TABLE 4-3

FORMER GRADE LEVEL OF CHINESE IMMIGRANT
STUDENTS IN CHINATOWN HIGH SCHOOL
BILINGUAL PROGRAM

Former Grade	Number of Students
Lower than sixth grade	25
Sixth grade	28
Seventh grade	15
Eighth grade	40
Ninth grade	48
Tenth grade	56
Eleventh grade	37
Twelfth grade	18
Total	267

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

Obviously many students were in water over their heads, and they had to contend with more advanced work as well as the entire spectrum of language difficulties and cultural adjustment.

Instead of presenting a list of grades for the twelfth grade students in 1978, we present some case histories; these will give the reader some fair idea of how the Chinatown high school students were coping academically.

Case Studies

Case 1: Male. Born 1957. Arrived September 1975 from Hong Kong First year tenth grade, failed three subjects; eleventh grade average 88; twelfth grade average 87.5. Graduated 1978, accepted at New York City Community College to study hotel management. Worked twenty hours per week in garment factory hanging dresses.

Case 2: Male. Born 1960. Arrived September 1975 from Hong Kong. Brother to Case 1. Average grades: 85 (10th), 86.7 (11th), 92 (12th). Accepted at SUNY, Stony Brook to study computer science. Worked twenty-four hours per week delivering food orders.

Case 3: Female. Born 1959. Arrived 1975 from Hong Kong. First year multiple failures. Attended Manpower Training classes for clericals in 1976. Returned to high school; graduated 1978 with a 79.5 average. Worked twenty-five hours in garment factory.

Case 4: Female. Born 1958. Arrived 1977. Failed American history, Spanish, hygiene. Transferred to secretarial school.

Case 5: Female. Born 1959. Arrived 1974 from Hong Kong. Average first year 71; second year 73. Accepted at community college to study data processing. Worked thirty hours per week in sewing factory.

Case 6: Male. Born 1957. Arrived 1975 from Mainland China. Four semester averages: 94, 92, 92, 87. Graduated with honors. Accepted at SUNY, Stony Brook to study computer science. Worked twenty hours per week as cashier.

Case 7: Male. Born 1959. Arrived 1975. Averages four semesters: 91, 90, 80, 84. Perfect attendance. Accepted at University of Buffalo to study electronics. Worked twenty hours per week in supermarket.

Case 8: Male. Born 1957. Arrived 1974 from Hong Kong. Four semester averages: 85, 90, 80, 80. Accepted Staten Island Community College to study data processing. Worked twenty-five hours per week pressing clothes.

Case 9: Female. Born 1960. Arrived 1975 from Hong Kong. First year grades: World History - D, Biology - D, Health Education - Unsatisfactory. Subsequent year averages: 91, 89, 85. Perfect attendance. Accepted New York State College at Binghamton.

Case 10: Female. Born 1957. Arrived 1975 from China. Averages: 78.4, 92.9. Accepted at SUNY, Stony Brook, in math program.

Case 11: Male. Born 1957. Arrived 1975. In 1976, multiple failures, many absences. Worked thirty-six hours per week in laundry. Dropped out and went to work for an airline.

Case 12: Male. Born 1958. Arrived 1976 from Hong Kong. Averages: 67, 83, 81. Accepted at Brooklyn College to study computer science. Worked in restaurants on weekends.

Case 13: Male. Born 1957. Arrived 1975 from Burma. First year failed many subjects. Twelfth grade average: 73. Accepted at City College New York to study science.

Case 14: Male. Born 1959. Arrived 1974 from Taiwan. Ill health, failed health education and social studies. Averages: 84, 81, 80.

Summation: 1978 Graduates

The above information was obtained by talking to the 1978 students who came into the counselor's office. Most were somewhat older than the average American high school students and most indicated that their first year was a tough one. Failures were common that year, but it seems that in subsequent years things began to improve and the grades picked up enough for the students to pass and eventually graduate.

The school record of these immigrant youths is passable considering the multiple handicaps under which they operated, but the reading scores were rather low. Considering that 117 of the 270 high school students surveyed had been in this country for less than a year, and another 77 for less than two years, it is a marvel that they had learned enough to be able to do their written assignments, work at outside jobs for so many hours, and still pass their courses with fairly decent grades. Note that most of these students had jobs that required more than twenty hours of their time per week; their grades might have been better had they not worked. The very fact that these youths managed to graduate and be accepted by colleges must be considered a tremendous feat. (There were, of course, those who did not make it through, but the drop-out rate among the students surveyed was not high. See Table 4-5 and the discussion of Discharges below.)

A follow-up of the graduates of the Chinese bilingual program in the Chinatown high school from 1975-1978 was done by the guidance counselor, and her findings are given in Table 4-4. Note the threefold increase in graduates over the course of three years. This may be due in large part to the implementation of the bilingual program in 1976. Note also that 91 percent of the graduates in the last two years went on to college!

TABLE 4-4

FUTURE PLANS OF CHINATOWN HIGH SCHOOL'S CHINESE
BILINGUAL PROGRAM GRADUATES
1975-1978

Future Plans	1975 -1976	1976 -1977	1977 -1978
Work	3	1	0
College:			
2 year	1	27	23
4 year	8	37	46
Manpower Training Institute	5	5	3
Military Service	0	0	2
No information	8	1	1
Total	25	71	75

SOURCE: High school bilingual program guidance counselor

What about those who did not graduate? How many dropped by the wayside? What happened to them? Why did they leave school? Again, we turned to the same guidance counselor who had kept excellent records of her discharges. These are tabulated in Table 4-5. Note the dramatic drop in the total numbers of students who were discharged from the bilingual program at the Chinatown high school, from 122 in 1976 to 77 in 1977 and to 32 in 1978. Each year, the numbers were approximately halved. One can surmise from the large percentage who went on to college and dramatic increase in graduates that the bilingual program did encourage the immigrant children to finish their high school education and perhaps aim higher.

An attempt was made to find data on the number of college-bound and discharged students in the bilingual program at the satellite community high school, but comparable data was unavailable. No figures by ethnicity were kept in the college or attendance office, but this researcher tried to construct a profile by going over the discharge records and tabulating those with Chinese-sounding names. Consequently, the figures for discharged students include American-born Chinese as well as foreign-born immigrants. Table 4-6 gives a breakdown of the discharges by reason for the three school years 1976 to 1979.

It was apparent from a study of the reasons for discharge from the satellite community school that many students moved out of New York City to such faraway places as California, Texas, Illinois, and others. This phenomenon was not true in the Chinatown high school; transfers to schools in other parts of the city were more common there. The dropout rate[2] was greater in the satellite community high school. We could not determine why this was so except to say that the bilingual program at this school was not established until the 1977-1978 school year and the staff did not include a guidance counselor. The lack of both could have been responsible for the higher dropout rate.

According to the director of the bilingual program, none of her students was ready for graduation. All were still in the tenth and eleventh grades. To get some inkling of where the satellite community high school Chinese graduates were heading, this researcher combed the list of June 1979 graduates for Chinese surnames; she found 84. Of these, 70 planned to go on to four-year colleges and 14 planned to go to two-year colleges. None indicated other plans for work, military service, or vocation schooling.

In this chapter, we have tried to paint a word picture of the teacher-student interaction and the students' record during their first years in the United States. We were encouraged by the progress that these students were making, helped along by the favorable attitude of the teachers toward

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[2] Not all discharges are dropouts as can be seen from Tables 4-5 and 4-6. Obviously, those who transferred to another school, who moved away, who went back to their homeland, or who earned a diploma on their own are not dropouts. According to the satellite community high school, dropouts were those who left school mainly because they were seventeen years of age or older and no longer had to remain in school to comply with the law.

TABLE 4-5

DISCHARGED CHINESE STUDENTS FROM THE BILINGUAL PROGRAM AT CHINATOWN HIGH SCHOOL 1975-1978

Reason for Leaving School	1975 -1976	1976 -1977	1977 -1978
Transferred to another school[1]	42	31	8
Working at a job	22	6	5
Returned to Hong Kong/Taiwan	1	1	2
Transferred to Manpower Training Inst.	7	4	4
Marriage	1	0	0
Already completed H.S. in HK/TW/China	1	2	2
Illness or death in family	0	1	0
Personal or mental health problem[2]	1	7	0
Moved away (no follow-up)	10	3	2
Gangs[3]	5	1	3
Financial hardship	8	1	1
No reason given	24	20	5
Total Discharged	122	77	32

SOURCE: High school bilingual program counselor

NOTE: 1. To nearby alternative school or other schools in the City.
2. Most personal problems involved difficulty getting along with parents.
3. Suspended because of gang activity.

TABLE 4-6

DISCHARGED STUDENTS WITH CHINESE SURNAMES FROM SATELLITE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL 1976-1979

Reason for Leaving School	1976 -1977	1977 -1978	1978 -1979
Transferred to another school	10	8	11
Working at job	0	1	0
Moved out of New York City	18	5	17
Returned to Taiwan/Hong Kong	1	5	2
Equivalency diploma	1	4	1
Died	0	0	1
Home instruction	1	0	0
Dropout, 17 years +	17	9	15
No reason given	2	1	6
Total Discharged	50	33	52

SOURCE: High school attendance office

NOTE: Includes American-born as well as immigrant students them and by the special but limited programs provided, such as those offered by bilingual teachers and counselors. Valid comparisons could not be made between the schools in Chinatown and those in the satellite community because comparable data were not obtainable, but we tried to throw some light on the situation wherever possible.

Findings

1. A positive interaction exists between teachers and Chinese pupils in the schools visited and studied. A cultural carryover of respect for the teacher and a high value placed upon education are important contributing factors.

2. Chinese children pose less of a behavioral problem than others in the student body, thus meriting further teacher favor.

3. Teacher criticisms include student passivity, a non-questioning attitude, discomfort in dealing with a relatively loosely structured classroom atmosphere, parental overprotectiveness and methods of treating the sick child, and a tendency to stick with their own ethnic group.

4. The school marks of the immigrant children were good in spite of the language barrier because they are accustomed to a much more rigorous standard in the Hong Kong or Taiwan schools. According to teacher opinion, the first year was the most difficult. Afterwards, the going was easier.

5. Many of the children--even some in the elementary schools--worked after school hours. In the Chinatown high school, 20 percent of the students surveyed worked twenty-five hours or more. In the satellite high school, the percentage was 16. (See Table 7-1)

6. Of the graduates from the Chinatown high school bilingual program, over 90 percent went on to college. College was almost a certain sequel for the graduates of both high schools.

7. Discharges from the Chinatown high school bilingual program dropped drastically from 122 in 1976 to 32 in 1978. Some of these were transfers. True dropouts were few. Discharges from the satellite community high school revealed that many were moving away from New York City.

CHAPTER V: BILINGUAL/BICULTURAL EDUCATION

Several years ago, my father suffered a stroke that left him speechless. Everytime he opened his mouth to talk, even as he framed the words with his lips, no sound came out. In spite of the fact that he was a gentle man, the effort to express himself resulted in such frustration that he would fly into a rage. He had so much to say, but it was all bottled up inside and could not come out. I suppose the reason why babies screech and clench their fists when they cry is that they cannot talk.

Imagine for a moment that you have lost your power of speech and that it will take a great deal of effort on your part to regain it. At the same time, in order to survive and carry on your daily activities, you have to communicate. Sign language, body language, and pantomine will work to a degree, but how can you tell someone in sign language that George Washington was the first president of the United States? If you can imagine this perhaps you can feel for the immigrant child who has to deal not only with the total adjustment of being uprooted and transplanted in a new country, but also with the sudden loss of almost all his ability to communicate.

Teach Them English

Luckily, the immigrant child has a recourse; compulsory education laws decree that he must go to school, so he may find himself sitting in a classroom within a few days of his arrival. The school's first task is to teach the child English as quickly as possible so he can join his peers in the regular classes for his age group. The school's task is no less difficult than that of the immigrant child.

As mentioned before, children in this country are placed in a class according to chronological age. A child starts school at age five or six, and promotion is generally routine. He completes elementary school at twelve, junior high at fifteen, and high school at eighteen. Age and grade level are fairly well synchronized.

The immigrant child may not fit into this mold. He may have started school late or repeated a grade or two because he failed his exams or otherwise was unable to measure up. Yet, when he comes to this country, he is generally placed into a grade corresponding to his age.

If he attends a school where he is an isolated Chinese immigrant, he is expected to keep up with the class work. He may get no special help in English at all, although a sympathetic teacher may ask a classmate to look after him a bit. Or she may be somewhat more lenient in grading him. Or she may keep him after class to give extra help. The options open to the teacher are few. The lesson plan and course schedule make no allowance for the child who does not speak English. His failure or success in keeping up is obscured by his nonparticipation and silence. According to a number of students to whom we talked, they were in a semi-daze for the first year.

In schools where immigrant children attend in greater numbers their difficulty with the language is immediately apparent because their problem is aggregated. One child can be overlooked, but a larger number cannot. How do the schools attempt to deal with the problem? There seem to be three approaches: Sink or swim, English as a Second Language (ESL), and bilingual education.

Sink or Swim

The philosophy behind this approach is self-explanatory: Put the child in his chronological age class "cold turkey," and he will be forced to learn. For those in the younger age groups, this method, although frightening and shocking at first, can work. It works better on the younger child than the teenager, for example, the mind of the younger child is flexible and receptive to the learning of languages, and the vocabulary and subject content of his lessons are not as advanced. For the teenager, this approach is questionable.

Proponents of the sink-or-swim approach maintain that this is what most immigrants did in the past and they managed.[1] The only thing they forget to mention is the number who could not swim and who sank to the bottom, out of sight and out of mind.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

Many schools adopt this approach. The immigrant child is placed in his chronological age class, but special attention is given to teaching him "survival English," the necessary phrases to meet his basic needs. The amount of ESL that a child gets depends upon the resources of the school or school district and the importance that the school administrators attach to it. In some schools, the immigrant children may take ESL only once or twice a week, whereas in other schools ESL is part of the daily curriculum. In the former case, a roving teacher makes the rounds of a number of schools, and the students are pulled out of their regular subject classes on the days that the ESL teacher comes. If the teacher comes at 11:00 A.M. on Tuesdays and

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1. In fact, Ling Chi Wang documented in his article, "How San Francisco School Administrators Block Bilingual Education," East/West, January 28, 1976, that in 1974 in San Francisco, of Chinese-speaking children, 1,138 were getting ESL, 193 were getting bilingual education, and 1,000 were getting no help at all.

Thursdays, for example, all non-English-speaking children go to ESL instead of going to their math or hygiene or social studies classes. The drawbacks to this system are obvious: the children miss their regular subject classes, and both their ESL and subject classes are spotty.

In classes like these that I have observed, the Chinese children are placed in ESL classes predominantly filled by Spanish-speaking students. Most ESL teachers are Spanish-speaking and some are monolingual. ESL teachers say that the principles of teaching ESL are the same for any foreign language pupil and that it is not important for the teacher to know the pupil's primary language. This premise can be challenged.

In the ESL classes, instruction in the formal structure and grammar of the English language is subordinated to fulfilling the need for the immigrant child to communicate orally. Some of the basic phrases and vocabulary necessary in our day-to-day activities are taken for granted, and we do not realize how confusing they may be to someone totally unfamiliar with the nuances of American expression. For example, how many ways can we express the time of day? We may say 4:45, a quarter to five, or fifteen minutes to five. Then there is A.M. or P.M., and a further refinement would be in the morning, noon, afternoon, evening, and night. Differentiating between these terms to express the time of day is only one of the many fine points that a newcomer must cope with continually.

In the six schools that we studied, each teacher taught ESL differently and each teacher chose his or her curriculum materials according to personal preference (see Table 5-1). Obviously, the classes were conducted as the teacher elected, so there was no uniformity. Some used pictures cut out of magazines as visual aids, others used first- and second-grade basal readers, while still others took advantage of specialized ESL curriculum materials such as the Lado English Series, the Scott Foresman English Around the World Series, and the Addison-Wesley New Horizons in English Series. One teacher used the silent method: She spoke as little as possible and used props to substitute for certain questions and words. This way, the teacher would not have to use up class time repeating the question or instruction. For instance, holding a long red plastic rod would mean, "What is Pedro wearing?" A yellow rod might stand for, "You used the wrong tense." A green rod might mean, "Repeat the sentence." and so forth. Of course, the association of the props with the words would have to be established first and could be changed with each new lesson. This was a novel way of forcing the student to do most of the talking, since as the teacher pointed the rods, the students would respond and repeat.

I was told that a student had to hear a phrase or sentence thirty-two times before it became a part of his vocabulary or speech. I think one teacher took this pedagogical theory too literally by requiring that every phrase be repeated by every student in the class twice. By the time it was repeated for the tenth time, the entire class, including myself, had tuned out the phrase and were bored silly.

The use of the elementary basal readers was also inappropriate. Fifth graders using first-grade readers modified simply could not relate to the

TABLE 5-1

LANGUAGE PROGRAMS FOR CHINESE IMMIGRANT STUDENTS

School	Program
Chinatown Elementary School	Three bilingual classes combining 1st & 2nd, 3rd & 4th, 5th & 6th grades. Classes taught in both English and Chinese.
Satellite Community Elementary School	Three hours of ESL pull-out weekly (two 1½-hour sessions). No bilingual program. Buddy system of tutoring by fifth graders about 15 to 20 minutes in the morning. Tutors meet with English teacher once each week to report on progress.
Chinatown Junior High School	Twelve hours of intensive ESL weekly. New arrivals first placed in an orientation class, from which they progress to Orientation/Transition, and on to Transition class before they are placed in regular classes. Each class is progressively more advanced. Bilingual approach*used. Lessons taught in English. Bilingual teacher may answer in Chinese or students may ask questions in Chinese. Class may be assisted by bilingual paraprofessional. Chinese offered as a foreign language.
Satellite Community Junior High School	Five hours ESL pull-out weekly; no bilingual education.
Chinatown High School	Well-organized bilingual/bicultural program in its third year of operation. Bilingual classes in history, math, and science; bilingual approach* for other subjects. Students take 12 hours ESL weekly for four semesters before going on to fulfill graduation requirements for English. Chinese offered as a foreign language.
Satellite Community High School	Bilingual program in its second year using bilingual approach.* Chinese dialect used is Mandarin rather than Cantonese. Ten hours of ESL weekly the first year, five the second year. Chinese offered as a foreign language.

* Bilingual approach means class taught primarily in English, but explanation or interpretation may be given in Chinese by teacher or bilingual paraprofessional.

SOURCE: Personal observation and on-site research.

subject matter or the pictures in the texts.

Bilingual Education

It is easy to confuse ESL with bilingual education, the school themselves sometimes are not too clear about the distinction. ESL is the teaching of functional English to persons who are already conversant in another language. Bilingual education means using two languages as the medium of instruction in subject areas where course content may be lost on a person who does not have command of the primary language. For example, a Chinese teenager, sixteen years of age, is put into the tenth grade when he comes here from Hong Kong. He simply cannot make up ten years of English sufficiently to deal with his courses in history, economics, science, math, hygiene, and social studies. Of course, he is taking ESL, which teaches him simple phrases of speech, but this does not enable him to do his reading and writing assignments for the other courses. The possible outcomes are that he will get lost and fall behind, or he will become discouraged and give up. The rationale behind bilingual education is to provide instruction in both Chinese and English to allow such a student to learn his history, social studies, math, and so forth with assistance given him in his native tongue.

This concept was recognized by the Lau v. Nichols decision handed down by the Supreme Court in 1974, which stated:

> . . . There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education.

Even before the decision was handed down, Congress had already authorized appropriations for bilingual education under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title VII (also known as the Bilingual Education Act) as early as 1968. In the act's first five years of operation, federally funded bilingual programs representing twenty-four languages serviced 180,000 children in forty-one states. Obviously, bilingual education is not solely for Spanish-speaking or Chinese-speaking children.

Some states have their own laws mandating bilingual/bicultural education, and the U.S. Congress has mandated that a five-year plan be drawn up to expand bilingual education services. In New York City, there is no mandate, but there is a consent decree reached between the Board of Education and Aspira whereby the Board agreed to work with Puerto Rican groups to implement bilingual programs. By the end of 1977, 537 of the city's 931 schools offered Spanish bilingual programs with a total of 61,190 students enrolled.[2]

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[2] Lena Williams, "Bilingual Education Program Stirs Controversy for New York Board," New York Times (November 24, 1977) B8.

TABLE 5-2

CHINESE BILINGUAL PROGRAMS IN NEW YORK CITY
1977-1978

Participating School Level	No. of Schools	No. of Students	Personnel		Source of Funds
Elementary K - 6	11	682	Coordinators	2	Titles I, VII
and			Classroom teachers	19	Chap. 720
Junior High 7 - 9	4	236	Resource teachers	4	Units 12, 13
			Paraprofessionals	31	
			Guidance Counsellors	3	
High Schools 9 - 12	3	667	Coordinator	1	Titles I, VII
			P/T Classroom teachers	22	Chap. 720 Tax Levies
			F/T Resource teacher	2	
			Area Specialists	3	
			Guidance Counsellor	1	
			Paraprofessionals	14	
Auxiliary Center	1	50	Teacher	1	Title VII
			Paraprofessionals	2	
Total	19	1,585			

SOURCE: New York City Board of Education, Office of Bilingual Education.

No such decree was worked out with any Chinese organization. Consequently, bilingual programs for the Chinese are few and of very recent origin. They are largely supported by state and federal funds, and only in isolated instances are they part of the school budget. In other words, bilingual education for the Chinese is a stepchild. It is not an integral part of the curriculum, but is looked upon only as a frill to be dispensed with as soon as federal and state funds cease. Were it not for the fact that proposals were submitted and grants approved from Title VII, federal sources, and Chapter 720 state funds, there would be no Chinese bilingual program at all.

The first bilingual program for Chinese-speaking students was initiated three years prior to this study (in 1975) in the Chinatown school district. The programs were modest, to say the least.

The expansion came about solely because a number of dedicated and concerned Chinese-American teachers wrote proposals, solicited funds, and worked unceasingly to establish the programs. Even then, the number of students serviced and the personnel hired for the programs were minimal. Bilingual paraprofessionals are the largest group of personnel employed (see Table 5-2). These people assist the teacher in the classroom and carry the load of translating, interpreting, and tutoring, yet they have no professional status.

In New York City schools, federal funds cannot be used to pay classroom teachers. Consequently, even if the coordinators were able to obtain funds to hire bilingual teachers who can teach in both Chinese and English, these funds could not be used to pay for the most important aspect of bilingual education--the teachers themselves. Such funds can be used only for resource teachers, the ones who develop curriculum materials.

This researcher found that the guidance counselors were among the most important links in the bilingual programs. These were the people who kept close watch over the students to spot any impending difficulties and deal with them immediately. For example, the moment a student is marked absent or late, a call goes to the family to find out why. If a student is out for three days, a visit is paid to the home. If the student is encountering problems with his school work, he is called into the counselor's office for a chat to discover the source of the problem and to deal with it right away. The counselor keeps track of the student's total setting: himself, his family, his job (if any), and his school work. Such supportive service is one of the most valuable aspects of the bilingual program.

Criticisms and Praise

A number of reports came out in 1977 highly critical of bilingual education. These include the Rand Report, the American Institute of Research Report, and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare Report. None of these included any of the Chinese bilingual programs in its evaluation. None of their remarks, therefore, pertain to the Chinese programs.

One school administrator at the Chinatown high school added his voice to the condemnation of bilingual education in a scathing letter to the editor of the New York Times, he did not differentiate between the Chinese program and the Spanish program. When questioned about the Chinese program, which was only two years old at that time, he voiced an opinion totally different than the one expressed in the Times:

> The philosophy of the bilingual education, which I am in total agreement with, is an attempt to take youngsters who are newcomers to the United States and bring them into the mainstream of American life. One of the tools of the process is, of course, language.

When asked how he would set up such a program, he replied:

> Exactly as the Chinese bilingual program is set up in this school. The instruction in the classrooms is done in both English and Chinese. The program attempts to take students who are floored to Chinese by giving them the subject matter in their own language, at the same time teaching them English. As soon as they are functionally sound in English, the student is moved out of the program into regular English classes.
>
> In the Chinese bilingual program, curriculum materials are translated into Chinese at the appropriate level of understanding. The other bilingual program at this school uses a college text for the course because it happens to be available.

Asked about his assessment of the Chinese bilingual program, he said:

> The Chinese bilingual program is a very solid, substantial program. That's the way a bilingual program should function, and that is why, in my opinion, it is such a superb success in the school. It should serve as a model for any bilingual program in the United States.[3]

Some very disturbing comments came from a former teacher[4] in the bilingual program. She said that she feels bilingual education slows down the process of learning English and "draws out the laziness in the student." Her philosophy is that if one wants to succeed, one must strive to learn. "Bilingual education takes away the challenge." Another of her criticisms is that bilingual classes segregate the immigrant children and thus lessen their opportunity to deal with others not like themselves. She also feels that the bilingual program only delays the students from dealing with the English learning until college, at which time the problem may be compounded. She has a number of suggestions for alternatives to bilingual education:

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[3] Personal interview.

[4] Personal interview.

1. Use English as the only medium of teaching in the classroom, but provide Chinese-speaking tutors.

2. Provide students with stipends so that they do not have to work and can spend more time to catch up with their school work.

3. Tutor the recent immigrant arrivals at first instead of placing them in classes.

4. Limit bilingual education to the early grades for the American-born whose parents feel that the maintenance of their native tongue is important.

How do the people involved feel about bilingual education? These include the teachers, the parents, and the students themselves. It seems as if the term itself is fraught with emotions and politics; the true purpose of bilingual education is lost in the shuffle.

Teachers' Attitudes

New York City has just been through a financial wringer, and the schools were hit hard. In 1975, 6,000 teachers were laid off, and new hiring was out of the question except for those teachers trained in bilingual education. Teachers with a bilingual background were given priority over those with seniority, and this set off a fight for job security that unleashed its full wrath upon bilingual education.

New York City's population has been declining and changing in composition. As seen in Tables 2-1 and 2-2, blacks, Hispanics, and Asians are increasing while whites flee to the suburbs or send their children to private schools. School enrollment is down due to the lower birthrate, so that teaching jobs are scarce. Those who do not have a second language facility feel that their jobs are threatened; they mask this fear by attacking bilingual education itself. Under the circumstances, teacher attitudes are colored by economic and political considerations. If they accept bilingual education, they may be jeopardizing their own jobs.

Teaching in two languages takes highly developed skills. One must be fluent in both languages and in subject content as well. The teacher must be sensitive to the student who has just been uprooted. And he/she must be aware of the possible conflicts in cultural values as well. Meeting the first criterion alone is difficult enough. In many instances, a person is fluent in one language and functional in another. For example, if the teacher is fluent in Chinese but speaks with an accent in English, students will not learn standard spoken English. If the teacher is fluent in English and speaks Chinese but is not well versed in the written language, she may find it difficult to get her lesson across when it comes to the translation. To be conversant in two languages with facility and be able to teach biology or economics or any other subject calls for talents of which there is a short supply.

Obviously, these demands on the bilingual teacher make it more difficult to teach a bilingual class. Even those who are quite facile in the language must spend extra time looking for the appropriate curriculum materials or creating their own. This, too, adds to their burden. According to some of the bilingual teachers we spoke with, they must spend a great deal of time preparing their lessons and looking up translations of the terms they are unfamiliar with. It is a double burden that they shoulder because they are dedicated. These disadvantages naturally affect the teachers' attitudes toward bilingual education.

One teacher who had taught bilingual classes felt that teaching in both languages was harder on the teacher and easier on the students. Another overconscientious teacher became ill from overwork after two years in the bilingual program. A third chose to go back to her regular classes because she felt that the students came to lean on bilingual education, and it was hard for them to do without it when they were on their own in college. A fourth said that with bilingual classes, the students can keep up with their work during a stressful period of their lives when they have to make so many adjustments. Strong students are further strengthened by a spur in their sides, and they may survive the sink-or-swim philosophy. The weak ones, however, will fall by the wayside without bilingual education.

In our research, we sensed a hesitancy on the part of the teachers to make a judgment about the bilingual programs in their schools. In a way it is unfair to judge the programs that have just been in existence for only two or three years. In the rush to implement the Supreme Court decision of Lau v. Nichols, little time was given to long-term overall planning. At the same time, commitment to bilingual education has only been halfhearted. The programs are structured so that they will abort or self-destruct within a short period of time, thereby fulfilling the doomed-to-fail prophecy. For example, in Table 5-2 we see that the largest number of bilingual personnel--forty-seven or almost one-half--were paraprofessionals. There were only twenty-six full-time teachers and twenty-two part-time ones. for 1,585 students. Funds committed to bilingual education come from nonbudgeted sources, which are uncertain from year to year. Unless someone takes it upon himself to apply for grants, there will be no money. Restrictions against use of federal funds for the hiring of classroom teachers also hamper the optimum use of bilingual resources. Add to this the political atmosphere and the economic issues of job competition, and you have a situation complicated by factors that do not address the fundamental question whether bilingual/bicultural education helps the immigrant children in their transition.

Parents' Attitudes

How do the parents feel? Their feelings are ambivalent and sometimes unrealistic. They want their children to learn English as quickly as possible, yet they are deathly afraid that the children will lose their command of Chinese and become estranged from them. Their expectations of their children's achievement are much too high. They feel that their children ought to do well in school. Their hopes are pinned on it. If the children fall behind or do not bring home good grades, the parents are extremely disappointed. They are influenced by the whirl of debate that goes on about bilingual education. Those who are ambitious for their children will insist on the sink-or-swim approach, arguing that the only way their children can get ahead is to devote full attention to mastering the English language. Immigrant parents in New York tend to think that the primary emphasis should be on learning English because their children already know some Chinese, whereas second-generation parents who gave up or had no chance to learn Chinese in their formative years now feel the void in their lives and would like their children to be exposed to their cultural heritage. Thus, there is another entirely different impulse behind the child's retention of his primary language--that of maintenance. Some parents want their children in bilingual classes so that they can learn English and Chinese simultaneously. The issue in this case is not one of facilitating the immigrant's entry into the mainstream as quickly as possible, but of maintaining his mother tongue.

Student Attitudes

How do the students feel about bilingual education? All of the recent immigrant children to whom we talked mentioned language as their most formidable problem. Some would sit in the classroom with a blank look on their faces. Those in the back of the room would fiddle or doodle. All were extremely hesitant or timid about opening their mouths. Some were downright fearful and apprehensive. Strange faces, strange ways, a foreign language they could not understand--all added up to anxiety and stress during the first year or so after the immigrant child's arrival in this country.

In our survey questionnaire administered to the high school students, one of the questions sought to find out the students' attitudes toward bilingual education; almost all of them were enrolled in the bilingual programs. The students' opinions were just as ambivalent as their parents'. Table 5-3 shows the answers we got to the question, "What is your opinion about bilingual education? Check all those that apply."

The responses given indicate that opinion is divided right down the middle. There was very little difference in the responses between the boys and the girls and in the favorable or unfavorable opinions. For example, 153 students said that bilingual education helped them understand better, yet 125 checked that they would rather be in the regular classes. On the other hand, 95, or about one-third, liked bilingual education, yet 85 felt that the bilingual program was for slow learners and 118 said that it impeded their learning English. Few would quit school if there were no bilingual programs.

TABLE 5-3

ATTITUDE OF HIGH SCHOOL BILINGUAL PROGRAM STUDENTS TOWARD BILINGUAL EDUCATION

	Males	Females	Total
Number	131	138	269
Favorable			
Helps me understand better	80	73	153
Helps me retain Chinese	24	45	69
Like bilingual education	45	50	95
Would quit if no bilingual education	5	8	13
			330
Unfavorable			
Rather be in regular classes	61	64	125
Bilingual education is for slow learners	38	47	85
Learn English slower	62	56	118
			328

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978.

There is a strong stigma attached to being in the bilingual classes. Some think that such classes are for the dumber students, which is not actually the case. On the contrary, if there were no bilingual education program, the immigrant children would be put into the slower track classes because they certainly would be unable to keep up at first with the "special progress" or "academic track" students. The worse part of this alternative is that students in the slower track generally exhibit behavioral problems that are disruptive of classroom learning.

In interviews with us, some students made the constructive suggestion that the teacher use less Chinese and more English, resorting to Chinese only when and if necessary.

The students we interviewed were eager to learn, their motivation was high. Given a little encouragement and some extra help, they could do well. In fact, by the second year, a somewhat miraculous "great leap forward" could be observed. This is confirmed by the students' records and by the teachers interviewed. When asked how long it generally took for the immigrant child to feel that he can cope and handle his lessons, teachers invariably answered, "One year." For those in the Chinatown schools, the period was a little longer. The younger the child, the quicker he adapts. The high school student has more difficulty, and his sense of frustration with the language barrier is more keenly felt.

In New York City, where the emphasis on bilingual education is transitional rather than maintenance the children are not retained in the bilingual or ESL programs if they can move on. There is constant movement in and out of the programs as new immigrants come to the school and the "graduates" move out. Loose guidelines state that the students should complete their transition within two years.

Bicultural Education

There is a third component of bilingual education that is often overlooked, and that is the bicultural. In the past, the immigrant was urged to become Americanized as quickly as possible. He was to shed his customs and traditions, folkways and values, dress and manners of speech, institutions, and identity. What was instilled in the immigrant in his homeland was denigrated; the American way was best. The Chinese way was strange, exotic, foreign, subversive, heathen, uncivilized, backward, funny, peculiar, un-American. The psychological price paid by the immigrants for their conflicts engendered by discarding their own ethnicity was often very high. The guilt accompanying the denial of oneself was great.

Bicultural education not only exposes the immigrant child to the acceptance of his own culture, but it also exposes other pupils in the school to aspects of the Chinese culture. In the Chinatown high school, the bilingual program includes a bicultural resource person who arranges for workshops for the teachers, organizes festivals in which Chinese dances and songs are performed, invites artists and folk crafts people like paper cutters to demonstrate to the entire school, and helps the Chinese students celebrate their holidays and festivals.

These activities introduce the entire student body to one aspect of Chinese culture: the arts, the music, the festivals. There is another aspect, however, that has not been touched upon. This is the values, the philosophy, or beliefs that a people live by. These beliefs are the core of any culture, whereas the customs or celebrations are only the outward manifestations. The bicultural component should, therefore, reach deeper to reveal the core values. If these values and beliefs differ, how can the conflict be resolved or compromised? In the next chapter, we will deal with some of these bicultural conflicts.

Language, a Creative and Psychological Force

In the haste to gain a tool whereby one can begin to deal with one's new environment, other facets of language that should be taken into account are often lost. According to Dean Marta Sotomayor of the University of Houston School of Social Work, language has many functions other than that of communication.

> The mental function determines the perception and definition of reality. Language is the intermediary of ideas, which allows people not only to think in that langu-

> age, but also to think through the vehicle of language itself. Thus, it is a creative force, molding one's thoughts and inevitably influencing behavior . . . .
>
> Language is also a cohesive force that promotes a sense of belonging and group solidarity. Psychologically language plays an important role in the formation of the self-concept. It is generally agreed that a positive self-perception is crucial to functioning adequately and comfortably in one's surroundings. The sense of belonging, vital to the development of the self-concept, becomes blurred if one's language, cultural patterns, and ethnic experiences are not reflected and supported, but given a negative connotation.[4]

In other words, low self-image, lack of motivation, and unsatisfactory performance are often interrelated in a child who is hampered by a language barrier. Repeated failures can only result in loss of confidence and self-esteem. Children with negative self-images are threatened and frightened by new or demanding tasks. They construct defense mechanisms for protection that may prevent them from being receptive to new experiences. They approach learning with fear and anxiety, which reduces their ability to learn.

Over the past three years that the Chinese bilingual program has been in existence in the Chinatown high school, Chinese student discharges dropped from 114 in 1976 to 77 in 1977 to 32 in 1978. The dean of boys also mentioned that a number of teenagers who had joined gangs were induced to come back to school with the implementation of bilingual classes. More students were encouraged to complete their high school education with the bilingual and counseling help provided. In assessing the value of bilingual/bicultural education programs, the evaluators should look at these aspects of the language question as well as at pre-test/post-test reading scores. They should also look at these by-products of bilingual/bicultural education.

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[4] "Language, Culture, and Ethnicity in Developing Self-Concept," Social Casework (April 1977) pp. 195-203.

Findings

1. True Chinese bilingual education programs in New York City's public schools were implemented only in 1975. What passed for bilingual education prior to that was English as a Second Language programs in which immigrant children were pulled out of their regular classes for special sessions in survival English.

2. Much controversy has revolved around the teaching of subject content in two languages. The differences of opinion have been colored by political considerations, economic issues, ethnocentrism, monetary funding, fears of loss of ethnic identity, and concerns about prospects for the future without a strong base in English. These issues have clouded the fundamental one of whether or not bilingual education is an aid to immigrant children in their adjustment to a new life in this country.

3. The fringe benefits of bilingual education must be assessed along with the learning of English and subject content. Among these benefits are higher student retention rate, more graduates, higher self-esteem that comes with acceptance of one's own ethnicity, and the scaling of the language barrier that may be an impediment to creativity and psychological well-being.

CHAPTER VI: BICULTURAL CONFLICT

The moment a child is born, he begins to absorb the culture of his primary group; these ways are so ingrained they become second nature to him. Imagine for a moment how wrenching it must be for an immigrant child who finds his cumulative life experiences completely invalidated and who must learn a whole new set of speech patterns and behavior when he settles in a new country. The severity of this culture shock is underlined by Teper's definition of culture:

> Culture is called a habit system in which 'truths' that have been perpetuated by a group over centuries have permeated the unconscious. This basic belief system, from which 'rational' conclusions spring, may be so deeply ingrained that it becomes indistinguishable from human perception--the way one sees, feels, believes, knows. It is the continuity of cultural assumptions and patterns that gives order to one's world, reduces an infinite variety of options to a manageable stream of beliefs, gives a person a firm footing in time and space, and binds the lone individual to the communality of a group.[1]

In our fieldwork, we found that the language barrier was the problem most commonly mentioned by the immigrant Chinese. Language looms largest because it is the conduit through which we interact with other people. It is the means by which we think, learn, and express ourselves. Less obvious is the basis upon which we speak or act or think. If there are bicultural conflicts, these may engender problems and psychological difficulties, which may not be immediately apparent but may nevertheless impact on the development of immigrant children.

In this chapter, we want to point out some of the cultural conflicts that commonly confront the Chinese child in the home and, particularly, in the schools. Oftentimes, teachers and parents are not aware of these conflicts and ascribe other meanings or other motives to the child's behavior, frequently in a disapproving fashion. Such censure confuses the child and quite often forces him to choose between what he is taught at home and what is commonly accepted by American society. In his desire to

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1. Shirley Teper, "Ethnicity, Race and Human Development" (N.Y. Institute on Pluralism and Group Identity of the American Jewish Committee, 1977), p. 20.

be accepted and to be liked, he may want to throw off that which is second nature to him; this may cause anguish and pain not only to himself but also to his parents and family. Teachers and parents should be aware of these differences and try to help the children resolve their conflicts instead of exacerbating them.

Aggressiveness

In Chinese culture, the soldier or the man who resorts to violence is at the bottom of the social ladder. The sage or gentleman uses his wits, not his fists. So the Chinese child is taught not to fight. The American father will take his son out to the backyard and give him a few lessons in self-defense at the age of puberty. He teaches his son that the ability to fight is a sign of manhood. The Chinese parent teaches his son the exact opposite: Stay out of fights.[2] Yet, when the Chinese child goes to the school playground, he becomes the victim of bullies who pick on him and call him a sissy. New York's teenagers can be pretty tough and cruel. If the child goes home with bruises and a black eye, his parents will yell at him and chastise him. What is he to do? The unresolved conflict about aggressive behavior is a major problem for Chinese-American males. They feel that their masculinity has been affected by their childhood upbringing.

What do the teachers or monitors do? In most instances, they are derisive of the Chinese boys. "Why don't the Chinese fight back?" they exclaim. "Why do they stand there and just take it?" This derision only shames the Chinese boys, who feel that their courage is questioned. This bicultural conflict may be reflected in the self-hatred of some Asian-American male activists who condemn the passivity of our forefathers in response to the discrimination and oppression they endured. Ignorant about their cultural heritage, the activists want to disassociate themselves from such "weakness," and they search for historical instances in which Asians put up a brave but costly and oftentimes futile fight to prove their manhood. The outbreak of gang violence may be another manifestation of the Chinese male's efforts to prove that he is "macho" also. He may be overcompensating for the derision that he has suffered.

Sexuality

In American schools, sexuality is a very strong and pervasive force. Boys and girls start noticing each other in the junior highs; at the high school level, sexual awareness is very pronounced. School is as much a place for male/female socialization as it is an institution for learning. Not so for the Chinese. Education is highly valued, and it is a serious business. To give their children an opportunity for a better education may be the primary reason why the parents push their children to study, study, study. Interest in the opposite sex is highly distracting and, according to some old-fashioned parents, is improper. Dating is an unfamiliar concept and sexual attractiveness is underplayed, not flaunted as it is according to American ways.

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[2] Richard Sollenger, "Chinese American Child Rearing Practices and Juvenile Delinquency," Journal of Social Psychology, Vol. 74 (1968) p. 17.

This difference in attitudes and customs poses another dilemma for both the Chinese boys and girls. In school, the white, black, or Hispanic girls like to talk about clothes, makeup, and the dates they had over the weekend. They talk about brassiere sizes and tampons. The popular girl is the sexy one who dates the most. She is the envy of the other girls.

For the Chinese girl, the openness with which other girls discuss boys and sex is extremely embarrassing. Chinese girls used to bind their breasts, not show them off in tight sweaters. Their attitude toward the opposite sex is quite ambivalent. They feel that they are missing something very exciting when other girls talk about phone calls from their boyfriends or about their dates over the weekends, yet they will shy away and feel very uncomfortable if a boy shows an interest in them.

Most Chinese parents have had no dating experience. Their marriages were by and large arranged by their own parents or through matchmakers. Good girls simply did not go out with boys alone, so the parents are very suspicious and apprehensive about their daughters dating, and they watch them very carefully. Most Chinese girls are not permitted to date, and for the daring girl who tries to go out against her parents' wishes, there will be a price to pay.

It is no easier for the Chinese boys. The pressure to succeed in school is even greater than for girls, and parental opposition to dating is even more intense. Naturally, the parents want their children to adhere to the old ways, while some children do not agree with their parents and have to carry on their high school romances on the sly. These children are bombarded by television, advertisements, stories, magazines, and real-life examples of boy-girl attraction. The teenager is undergoing puberty and experiencing the instinctive urges surging within him or her. In this society they are titillated, whereas in China they are kept under wraps until they are married.

The problem is exacerbated when teachers make fun of Chinese customs and the parents. I saw an instance of this at one of the Chinatown schools. A young Chinese girl had been forbidden by her parents to walk to school with a young Puerto Rican boy who was in the habit of accompanying her every day. To make sure that the parents were being obeyed, the grandmother would walk behind the girl to see that she did not walk with the boy. Grandma even hung around until her granddaughter went into class, and then she would peer through the window to make sure all was proper before she went home. Naturally, this was embarrassing for the girl, and it must have been noticed by the homeroom teacher. He exploded in anger at the little old lady and made some rather uncomplimentary remarks about this being the United States and that Chinese customs should have been left behind in China. To my mind, this teacher's attitude and remarks could only push the daughter farther away from her parents. What he could have done was explain to the girl, or even to the entire class, the cultural values and traditions of her parents, so that she could understand how they thought and why they behaved in such a fashion. Putting down the parents and their customs is the worst thing he could have done.

Sports

The Chinese attitude toward sports is illustrated by an oft-told joke about two Englishmen who were considered somewhat mad. The two lived in Shanghai where they had gone to do business. In the afternoons, they would each take a racquet, go out in the hot sun, and bat a fuzzy ball across the net. As they ran back and forth across the court, sweat would pour from their faces, and they would be exhausted at the end of the game. To the Chinese onlookers standing on the side, this was sheer lunacy. They would shake their heads in disbelief and ask: "Why do these crazy Englishmen work so hard? They can afford to hire coolies to run around and hit the ball for them." The Chinese attitude toward sports has changed considerably, but it still does not assume the importance that it enjoys in American life.

Turn on any news program on radio or television, and you will find one-third of the air time devoted to sports. Who are the school heroes? The football quarterback, the track star, the baseball pitcher. What are the big events in school? The games. What is used to rally school spirits? The games.

Yet in the traditional Chinese way of thinking, development of the mental faculties was more important than development of the physique. The image of a scholar was one with a sallow face and long fingernails indicating that he spent long hours with his books and not had to do physical labor. Games that required brute strength, such as football and boxing, were not even played in China. Kung fu or other disciplines of the martial arts did not call for physical strength as much as concentration, skill, and agility. In the minds of many Chinese, sports are viewed as frivolous play and a waste of time and energy. Add to this the generally smaller physique of the Chinese immigrant student in comparison to his classmates, and we do not find many of them on any of the school teams.

What does this mean to the Chinese immigrant students, especially the boys? On the one hand, they may think that the heavy emphasis upon sports is a displaced value. They may want to participate, but they are either too small in stature or unable to devote the time necessary for practice to make the school teams. If the "letter" men are the big wheels, the Chinese student will feel that his kind are just the little guys. But most important of all, an entire dimension of American school life is lost to the Chinese immigrant children.

Tattling

Should one report a wrongdoing? Should one tell the teacher that a schoolmate is cheating on his exam? Should one report to the school authorities that a fellow student is trying to extort money from him? The American values on this score are ambiguous and confusing. For example, in the West Point scandal a few years ago, most of the cadets involved were not cheaters themselves but they knew about the cheating and did not report it to the authorities. Their honor code required that they tell, but the unwritten code among their fellow cadets said that they should not tattle or "fink." If they had reported the cheating of their fellow cadets, they would have been socially ostracized. There is a dilemma for the American here as well.

This bicultural conflict was noted by Denise Kandel and Gerald S. Lesser in their book, Youth in Two Worlds,[3] in which their reference groups were Danish and American children. The Danish children, like the Chinese, feel duty bound to report wrongdoing. There is no dichotomy of consequences here. Authorities and peers are consistent in their attitude in this respect, and this consistency helps to maintain social control. The teacher cannot be expected to have four pairs of eyes and see everything. The parents cannot be everywhere at once to know what their child is doing during the day. If the siblings or schoolmates will help by reporting wrongdoing, the task of teaching the child is shared and made easier for the adults. But when social ostracism stands in the way of enforcing ethical values, an intense conflict ensues and contributes to the breakdown of social control.

Demonstration of Affection

A commonly voiced concern among Chinese children is, "My parents do not love me. They never kiss or hug me. They are so cold, distant, and remote." The children long for human warmth and affection because they see it on the movie and television screens, and they read about it in books and magazines. Because their experiences with mother and father and the other members of the family as well are so formal and distant, they come to the conclusion that love is lacking. In China, where such behavior is the norm, children do not question it. But in this country, where expressions of affection are outwardly effusive, and commonly exhibited, they feel deprived.

This lack of demonstrative affection extends also to the spouse and friends. To the Chinese, physical intimacy and love are private matters never exhibited in public. Even in handshaking, the traditional Chinese way was to clasp one's own hands in greeting. Kissing and hugging a friend would be most inappropriate, and to kiss one's spouse in public would be considered shameless and ill-mannered.

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[3] San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., (1972).

Nevertheless, Chinese children in this country are attracted to the physical expressions of love and affection. While they crave it for themselves, they are often unable to reciprocate or be demonstrative in their relations with their own spouses, children, or friends because of their detached emotional upbringing.

In the schools, this contrast in culture is made all the sharper because of the large numbers of Hispanics in the same schools. In general, the Hispanics are very outgoing and are not the least bit inhibited about embracing, holding hands, or kissing even a casual acquaintance. The Chinese children may interpret these gestures of friendliness as overstepping the bounds of propriety, but more often than not they wish they could shed their reserve shells and reach out to others in a more informal manner. On the other hand, the aloofness of the Chinese students is often wrongly interpreted as unfriendliness, standoffishness, as a desire to keep apart. If all the students in the schools were made aware of these cultural differences, they would not misread the intentions and behavior of one another.

Education

That education is a highly prized cultural value among the Chinese is commonly known, and the fact that Chinese children generally do well scholastically may be due to the hard push parents exert in this direction. None of this means, however, that these children do not experience a bicultural conflict regarding education when they see that the bright student is not the one who is respected and looked up to in American schools. Labels such as "bookworm," "egghead," and "teacher's pet" are applied to the intelligent students, and these terms are not laudatory, but derisive. When parents urge their children to study hard and get good grades, the children know that the payoff will not be social acceptance by their schoolmates. The rewards are not consistent with values taught at home.

Nevertheless, the Chinese immigrant high school students indicated in their survey questionnaire that they prized the opportunity to get an education. In fact, they identified the opportunity to get a free education as one of the most important reasons why they are satisfied with their school work. Of 143 students who said that they were satisfied with their school work, 135 mentioned this one factor. Education was not easily available to everyone in China, Hong Kong, or Taiwan. It is attained at great personal sacrifice on the part of the parents. It is costly and it is earned by diligence and industry on the part of the student. In this country, school is free through high school. Everyone has to go to school until sixteen years of age in New York, and it is not a matter of students trying to gain admittance by passing rigorous entrance exams, but a matter of the authorities trying to keep the drop-out rates low that characterizes the educational system here.

This is ground also for conflict, however, since what is free and easy to get is often taken lightly. New York academic standards are lower than those in Hong Kong or Taiwan, and the school work is easier to keep up with. As a result, there is less distinction attached to being able to stay in school or graduate. What the Chinese immigrant students prize highly has less value in the larger society, and again the newcomers to this country start to have doubts about the goals that they are striving for.

Thrift

Twelve, perhaps thirteen, banks can be found within the small core area of New York's Chinatown. When the Manhattan Savings Bank opened a new branch in October 1977 it attracted to its coffers $3 million within a few months time. Most of the large banks are aware that Chinatown is fertile ground for the accumulation of capital because the Chinese tend to save more of what they earn than other ethnic groups in America in spite of the fact that their earnings are small. The savings grow because of two major factors. One is the sense of insecurity common to immigrants, who need a cushion for the uncertainties that they feel acutely. The other is the esteem with which thrift is regarded by the Chinese. A person who is frugal is thought of more highly than is one who can sport material symbols of success.

I was once sent on an assignment to cover the story of a very wealthy Chinese from Bangkok who was reputed to own shipping lines, rice mills, and many other industries. He was a special guest of the United States Department of State, and that evening he was to be honored at the Waldorf-Astoria. I found this gentleman in a very modestly-priced midtown hotel. When he extended his hand to shake mine, I saw that his suit sleeves were frayed.

The value placed upon thrift poses acute bicultural conflict for Chinese immigrant children who see all about them evidence of an economic system that encourages the accumulation and conspicuous consumption of material possessions. A very important segment of the consumer market is now the teenage population. The urge to have stylish clothes, a stereo, a camera, a hi-fi radio, sports equipment, and even a car creates a painful conflict in the child who is enticed by television and other advertising media, but whose parents reserve a large percentage of their meager earnings for stashing away in the banks.

In school, the girl who gets money to spend on fashionable dresses and the latest rock record feels more poised and confident about herself than do her less materially fortunate classmates. She is also admired, complimented, and envied. In the Chinese community, on the other hand, a Chinese girl who spent a lot of money on clothes and frivolities would soon be the object of grapevine gossip, stigmatized as a less-than-desirable prospective wife or daughter-in-law, whereas praises would be sung for the more modestly dressed girl who saved her money.

From my students I hear a commonly voiced complaint about their parents as "money-hungry." They give their children very little spending money. They do not buy fashionable clothing; rather, they buy only serviceable garments in which the children are ashamed to be seen. The Chinese home is generally not furnished for comfort or aesthetics, so when Chinese children visit the homes of their non-Chinese friends and compare them with their own living quarters, they feel deprived and ashamed of their parents and their family. They certainly do not want to bring their friends home to play, and the teenagers may themselves stay away from home as much as possible, feeling more comfortable with their peers in clubhouses or on the streets. The contrast in spending attitudes between the underdeveloped economy from which many Chinese immigrants have come and the American economy, which emphasizes mass and even wasteful consumption is very sharp, and it creates many an unresolved conflict in the children, who do not realize that cultural differences lay behind it. They think that their parents value money more than they care for their children, and exhibit this by denying material possessions that give them pleasure and status in the eyes of their peers.

Credit is another concept foreign to immigrants from the Far East. If one does not have the money, one should not be tempted to buy. Credit is borrowing money, and borrowing should be resorted to only in extreme emergencies. The buy now, pay later idea goes against the Chinese grain. So the Chinese families postpone buying until they have saved up enough to cover the entire purchase price. This attitude is fairly common even when it comes to the purchase of a home. The family will scrimp and economize, putting aside a large portion of its income for this goal, denying itself small pleasures along the way for many, many years until the large sum is accumulated. To the Chinese way of thinking, this singleness of purpose shows character, but to the more hedonistic American mind, this habit of thrift may appear asinine and unnecessary.

Dependency

In her study, "Socialization Patterns Among the Chinese in Hawaii," Nancy F. Young noted the prolonged period of dependency of the children commonly found in the child-rearing practices of the Chinese in Hawaii. She wrote:

> Observations of Chinese families in Hawaii indicate that both immigrant and local parents utilize child-rearing techniques that result in parent-oriented, as opposed to peer-oriented behavior. . . . Chinese parents maximize their control over their children by limiting their experiences with models exhibiting non-sanctioned behavior.[4]

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[4] Op. cit., Amerasia Journal, vol. 1, no. 4 (February 1972), p. 36.

Analyzing and comparing the results of the Chance Independence Training Questionnaire that she administered to six ethnic groups and local (American-born) Chinese as well as immigrant Chinese, she found the mean age of independence training for American-born Chinese to be the lowest while that for immigrant Chinese to be the highest.

TABLE 6-1

MEAN AGE OF INDEPENDENCE TRAINING FOR SELECTED ETHNIC GROUPS

Ethnic Stock	Mean Age of Independence Training
Local Chinese (American-born)	6.78
Jew	6.83
Protestant	6.87
Negro	7.23
Greek	7.67
French-Canadian	7.99
Italian	8.03
Immigrant Chinese	8.85

SOURCE: Nancy F. Young, Op. cit.

Immigrant mothers exercise constant and strict supervision over their children. They take the children wherever they go, and babysitters are unheard of. They prefer their children to stay home rather than go out to play with their friends. Friends are carefully screened by the mother, and the child is not expected to do things for himself until about two years beyond the mean age that a Jewish mother would expect her child to do for himself (see Table 6-1).

On the other hand, American-born Chinese parents expect their children to cut the apron strings sooner than any of the other ethnic groups surveyed. Young did not elaborate and explain why, but it seems that Chinese parents who are American-born have assimilated the American values of independence at an early age and may even have gone overboard in rearing their own children. There are areas of dependence and independence in which Young found divergence. The immigrant Chinese child is expected to be able to take care of himself at an earlier age, but he is discouraged from socializing with people outside the family until a much later age.

The extremes exhibited between the American-born and immigrant Chinese may be indicative of the bicultural conflict that the Chinese in this country feel. As children, they may have felt that their parents were overprotective; this was frequently mentioned by the teachers to whom we talked. We saw evidence of this in the elementary schools, the previously mentioned practice of mothers coming to the school from the garment factories during their own lunch hours to feed their children lunch. Many walked their children to and from school,[5] even as late as the junior high level, but it was not clear to us whether the parents were justifiably afraid for their children's safety from the gangs or whether they were being overprotective. The teachers thought the mothers were smothering the children and restricting their freedom of action. By adolescence, the children must have felt the same. They were chafing against parental control over what they presumed to be their own business, while the parents thought they were merely doing their parental duty.

Teachers and parents do not agree on this score, with the result that parental authority is often undermined by a teacher's scoffing attitude. A personal experience of my own reveals how damaging this can be to a parent's ability to maintain some kind of control over the growing teenager.

My seventeen-year-old son was coming home late at night, and I found it hard to fall asleep until he was home. I did not feel that he should be up so late, nor did I wish my sleep to be disturbed. My son objected strenuously to a curfew of midnight during the week and 1 A.M. on the weekends. His objection was based on the fact that no other teenagers he knew had such restrictions, that most get-togethers did not get going until 11 P.M., and that he would be the "wet-blanket" if he left early. I understood his concerns and tried to get the parents of his friends to agree to a uniform time when the group should break up and go home to bed. I felt that if everybody had to go, my son would not mind leaving.

To my utter surprise, not one of the parents felt that boys or girls of seventeen years of age should have a curfew. They felt that I was being too strict and overprotective and that it was time for me to cut the apron-strings. The worst part of it was that my conversation with the parents got back to my son, who immediately and gleefully confronted me with, "See, none of the other parents agree with you. You are the only old-fashioned, strict one." This lack of understanding on the part of the other parents in telling my son about our conversation undermined my authority. From that day, I was unable to set hours for him any more.

Respect for Authority

The Chinese value of respect for one's elders and for authority is common knowledge and needs no further elaboration here. We have already mentioned that the Chinese immigrant children encountering the disrespect accorded teachers and school authorities for the first time in American classrooms find themselves extremely upset and dismayed. In our interviews with the students, this concern was voiced frequently.

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[5] Since the mothers worked on piece-rate basis they could leave their machines and go to the schools to pick up their children.

Challenge against established authority has been a notable feature of youth culture over the past two decades. The parents, the teachers, the police, the government, the church--all authority figures in the past--have been knocked down and even reviled. Violence against teachers is the leading problem in schools across the nation. If students do not have respect for the teacher, neither will they have respect for the knowledge that the teacher tries to impart. The issue is a disturbing one, not only for the immigrant children but for the entire American society as well.

Heroes and Heroines

Who are the people who are praised, admired, looked up to, and revered? The idols of different cultures are themselves different types of people, and the values of a society may by deduced from the type people who are respected and emulated in that culture. In the United States, the most popular figures are movie, television, and stage stars; sports figures; politicians; successful authors; inventors; and scientists; probably in that order. Who are the heroes and heroines of China? If we use literature as a guide, they are the filial sons or daughters; the sacrificing mother; the loyal minister; the patriot or war hero who saves his country; and revolutionaries who overthrow despotic rulers and set up their own dynasties. Even in modern-day China, the persons honored and emulated are the self-sacrificing workers who put nation above self.

Priests, ministers, and rabbis once commanded prestige in this country, but the status of these men of God has declined. In China, monks or priests have always occupied lowly positions. In contrast to the United States, in China actors were riff-raff. Women did not act in the theater, so men had to play the female roles. Western influence has brought about changes in the psuedo-Chinese cultures of Hong Kong and Singapore and stage performers and movie stars are now popular and emulated, but this was not always so.

As a rule, Chinese heroes and heroines were people of high moral virtues, and they set the standards of conduct for others. In this country, the more sensational the exposé of the private lives of our national leaders or entertainment figures, the more our curiosity is aroused. How movie stars retain their popularity in spite of the relentless campaigns to strip them naked is very difficult for someone not brought up in the United States to comprehend. An old adage says, "No man is a hero to his valet." Yet, the very fact that American heroes and heroines survive and thrive on notoriety and self-confession can only mean that the American people admire such behavior. One might say, Chinese heroes are saints; American heroes are sinners.

Individualism

Dr. Francis L. K. Hsu, noted anthropologist, has written extensively about individualism as a prominent characteristic of American life.[6] According to Dr. Hsu, the basic ingredient of rugged individualism is self-reliance. The individual constantly tells himself and others that he controls his own destiny and that he does not need help from others. The individual-centered person enjoins himself to find means of fulfilling his own desires and ambitions.

Individualism is the driving force behind the competitiveness and creativity that has pushed this nation forward. Loose family ties, superficial human relationships, little community control, and weak traditions have given the individual leeway to strike out on his own without being hindered by sentimentality, convention, and tradition. Self-interest has been a powerful incentive.

In contrast, Dr. Hsu contends, the Chinese are situation-centered. Their way of life encourages the individual to find a satisfactory adjustment with the external environment of men and things. The Chinese individual sees the world in relativistic terms. He is dependent upon others and others are dependent upon him. Like bricks in a wall, one lends support to the other and they all hold up the society as a whole. If even one brick becomes loose, the wall is considerably weakened; interlocked, the wall is strong. The wall is the network of human relations. The individual subordinates his own wishes and ambitions for the common good.

Dr. Kenneth Abbott, in his book Harmony and Individualism, also points out that the Western ideas of creativity and individualism are not accented in Chinese and must be held within accepted norms. One of the reasons for this is the importance ascribed to maintenance of harmony. Harmony is the key concept in all relationships between god(s) and man and between man and man. It is the highest good.[7]

To the Chinese, the sense of duty and obligation takes precedence over

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6. Americans and Chinese: Reflections on Two Cultures and Their People (New York: American Museum of Science Books, (1972), and "Rugged Individualism Reconsidered," The Colorado Quarterly, vol. IX, no.2 (Autumn 1960).

7. Op. cit., (Taipei: The Orient Cultural Service, 1970). See also "Culture Change and the Persistence of the Chinese Personality," in George DeVos, ed., In Response to Change (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1976).

self-gratification. (It is not uncommon to find Chinese teenagers handing over their entire paychecks to their parents for family use or for young Chinese males to pursue a course of study chosen for them by their parents rather than one of their own choosing.) Responsibility toward distant kin is more keenly felt by the Chinese than by other Americans. Honor and glory accrue not only to the individual but to all those who helped him climb the ladder. This sense of being part of something greater than oneself gives the Chinese a feeling of belonging and security in the knowledge that they do not stand alone. On the other hand, individual freedom of action is very much restricted.

The foregoing are but examples of the many areas of bicultural conflicts that confront a newcomer to these shores. We have omitted such better known ones as respect for elders, modesty and humility, male superiority, and others because they have been dealt with at length elsewhere.

Findings

1. Chinese children are brought up to refrain from aggressive behavior, whereas the masculine image in this country stresses the macho type. Chinese males are particularly troubled by this bicultural conflict.

2. Sexual attractiveness is expressed subtly according to Chinese customs, whereas it is played up according to American customs. This is an area of special concern for the high-school age Chinese-American female.

3. Sports are a consuming pastime for the American people, whereas it takes a backseat to scholastic achievement for the Chinese.

4. Chinese children feel that they are duty-bound to report wrongdoing; yet tattling or "ratting" is a serious offense in the eyes of their American peers.

5. Chinese children in this country are attracted by the physical expressions of love and affection customary here, but they are inhibited by their less demonstrative upbringing. At the same time, they may question their parents' love in light of the more overt affection they observe among their peers' parents.

6. Education and scholastic achievement are not as highly valued in the United States as they are in China.

7. Thrift is a worthy character trait according to the Chinese way of thinking, whereas conspicuous consumption is favored in the United States. The two ways of thinking are incompatible and do cause conflict for the Chinese children.

8. Immigrant Chinese parents do not encourage early independence in their children. They discourage their children from socializing outside the family until a much later age than do other ethnic groups.

9. Immigrant Chinese children find it hard to accept the lack of respect for authority--especially toward teachers--among their peers in school.

10. Chinese heroes and heroines tend to be persons of high moral caliber. American idols tend to be entertainment figures, sports stars, or persons who have achieved tangible success in terms of wealth or material attainment. The more sensational the private lives of these people, the more they attract public attention.

11. The Chinese try to fit themselves into the scheme of things, whereas the American way is based on individualism.

CHAPTER VII: AFTER-SCHOOL HOURS

Work in Garment Factories

Even at the elementary school level, children hurried off to the garment factories right after school. That was where Mother was, and they went to join her or to report to her for assignment of their daily chores before they went home to an empty apartment. Many of the children stayed beside Mother's sewing machine doing their homework or helping her ready the garments for sewing. The bosses did not object to the children being underfoot. They accepted the daily presence of children after three o'clock as the normal course of events. After the children finished their homework, and if they did not have work to do, they played with each other among the empty boxes or between the bundles of garments piled high.

Elementary Level. Children aged ten, eleven, or twelve often were given jobs that they could handle, and this became steady employment for them. Putting plastic bags over finished garments, turning belts inside out, cutting threads, or folding finished garments do not involve too much strength or skill, so these were tasks that the children performed. They were paid a penny or two for each garment hung or for each belt turned. On average days, they earned two to three dollars, which would be added to the mother's paycheck.

Of three children interviewed at the Chinatown elementary school who worked in a garment factory, one boy said, "I work every day from three to eight. Sometimes, until twelve midnight. I stay with my mother and I go home when she goes home." A girl said, "Most of the time we leave the factory at seven or eight." Another boy said, "We leave at six-thirty, usually." The hours worked depend upon the season and how long the mother choses to work. She is paid on a piece-rate basis so she can generally set her own hours When there is a rush job or a deadline on a shipment, however, the boss will ask the women to stay later and finish the job lot.

Jobs at the garment factories are the most common, but the children perform other work as well. These include delivering take-out orders from the restaurants, peeling onions and shrimp, making won-ton or meat dumplings, filling small containers with soy sauce or mustard, sweeping out stores or running errands. The variety of jobs are endless, and more often than not they are performed for relatives or parents who own the restaurant or store. One has to have some kind of family connection to get a job.

Junior-High Level. At the junior-high and high-school level, however, the expectation of parents that children will contribute to the family income is greater. At the junior high in Chinatown, I talked to six children out of fourteen who were in the seventh grade orientation class (the class for the most recent immigrants). This is what I discovered:

Student 1: Girl. Helps her mother in factory until 8:00 P.M. daily. Does not have to, but wants to be close to her Mother.

Student 2: Girl. Six members in family. Mother and three older sisters work in garment factory. She helps after school. Father dead.

Student 3: Girl. Does not work, but would like to get job.

Student 4: Girl. Does not work. Father works for an American employer as chef.

Student 5: Girl. Nine members in family. Parents, three older sisters, and grandmother work in garment factory. Younger members go after school. All get off at 5:00 or 6:00 P.M. Go home, cook, and eat together.

Student 6: Boy. Five in family. All work at same factory, including older brother, 17, and younger sister, 10. He is 14.

In another class, the teacher asked for a show of hands from his seventh graders who held jobs after school. Of the 71 students, 20 worked and 4 went to Chinese school. It seems that the more recent immigrant families are very anxious for their children to work, most likely because of economic necessity brought on by the huge expenses incurred for transportation and relocation.

At the Chinatown junior high school, a number of teachers did mention that the children were very sleepy in the mornings. At first they thought the children had stayed up late watching television, but discovered that the children had worked until late at night. One Chinese-American teacher commented:

> The immigrant Chinese are very conscious of money. Money seems to be the overwhelming goal in their lives. They work very hard and they expect the children to help out. Once a teenager gets the feel of money in his hands, he wants to go to work and he wants to drop out, especially if he is having difficulty with the language and his school work.

Fortunately, the parents want their children to finish school, but at the same time, the children are expected to contribute in part to the family expenses.

In the satellite community schools, the children are located far from the heavy concentration of garment factories and restaurants found in Chinatown. Work was not readily available to these youngsters. Besides, as we noted, the suburban immigrants usually have more of a financial cushion and are not as frantic about economic security. We found only a few students who had after-school jobs in the elementary or junior high schools in the satellite community.

High School Level. In the high schools, we had two sources of data about the extent of after-school employment. Neither is based on scientific samples, but both are indicative of the overall situation. One was the records kept by the bilingual program guidance counselor consisting of all 435 students in the bilingual program in the Chinatown high school for the year 1976. Over 80 percent of these students indicated that they worked twenty hours or more per week, and 43 percent said that it was necessary for them to contribute to the support of the family. The other source was the survey questionnaire that we administered in the same school in 1978. These are not exactly the same students, although there may be some overlap. Tabulation of the hours spent by the 270 students surveyed showed that approximately one-half of the Chinatown high school students worked sixteen hours or more and about one-fifth worked twenty-five hours or more per week (see Table 7-1). On the other hand, about one-third did not work at all. The groups from our two sources are not identical so the figures are not comparable. In our interviews with the students, however, we gained the impression that the students put in a substantial number of hours at jobs. Fewer satellite community high school students worked at regular jobs and not many had household chores either. It was presumed that since the mothers worked, the domestic chores may have been relegated to the children, but this turned out not to be so. Either the mothers shouldered the extra burden or household duties were neglected. More likely it was the latter.

TABLE 7-1

WEEKLY HOURS SPENT ON JOB, CHORES, OR TELEVISION BY CHINATOWN AND SATELLITE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

	Job			Chores			Tele-vision
Hours	C.T.	Sat.	Total	C.T.	Sat.	Total	
	N=199	N=71	N=270	N=199	N=71	N=270	N=270
0	31%	61%	39%	45%	51%	47%	26%
1-5	5	1	4	22	21	21	14
6-10	6	7	6	16	10	14	22
11-15	11	1	8	9	8	9	24
16-20	16	3	13	3	1	3	11
21-25	12	10	11	3	4	3	3
25+	20	17	19	3	4	3	0

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978.

Recreation

In the lower grades, the children invariably reported that they had few recreational outlets after school. Their one most important pastime was watching television. If they did not go to the factory to be with their mothers, they stayed home and turned on the television. The streets certainly were not safe for play. Watching television is not unique to the Chinese immigrant children. According to the Neilson reports, preschoolers in the United States watch an average of thirty-three hours of television per week. Six- to eleven-year-olds average twenty-nine hours, while teenagers get in from twenty-four to twenty-six hours.[1] Probably because of the long hours spent at jobs, the Chinese teenagers do not watch much television.

Aside from going to the movies occasionally, watching television, participating in sports, and reading for pleasure, the high school students indicated that they had few other recreational outlets. Very few went to dances or parties or social events. In fact, the lack of recreation for these young people is very striking. Chinese student clubs or organizations at the high schools or colleges used to sponsor dances or parties, but gang intrusion into social events and dances have all but killed these activities. Since 1971, gang members would try to crash these social events. If thwarted, they would brandish their guns, and on a number of occasions they shot up the place. Thereafter, Chinese-American clubs no longer dared to have dances. So there are few opportunities for young people to get together. The effects of this vacuum can be deleterious to these young people, who have little opportunity to acquire the social graces and ease needed to associate and deal with people. As one Chinese-American principal put it, "Our youth are becoming 'socially retarded.'" Remember the adage: All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. This lack of finesse in the social sphere becomes apparent only when these people come out to work after graduation from high school or college. In a survey of City College of New York graduates conducted by the author, many of those interviewed mentioned their lack of social graces and contacts as a huge barrier to career advancement. The "dull-boy" syndrome had shown up to plague them in their adult years.

After-School Centers

School lasts from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M., right? Wrong. For some of the Chinese children in Chinatown, the school day extends from 8:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. In the morning, free breakfast is served to give the children something in their stomachs to provide them enough energy to get through the morning. Hot, nutritious lunches are also served in midday. In January 1979 at the Chinatown elementary school, 809 out of the 847 students were signed up for free breakfast and 795 for free lunch. At the Chinatown junior high school 200 out of a total of 470 students were served free breakfast and 400 were served free lunch.

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[1] American Teacher (November 1978) p. 14.

The principal of the elementary school said, "Some people say that we are surrogate parents in feeding the children two meals out of three, but I don't mind doing these things even if they are not properly within the province of the school. Children used to pass out in the mornings before we served breakfast. I would like to see these services coordinated under the school."

When the three o'clock bell rings, the normal American pattern for school children is to go home, eat a snack, go out to play or do chores, go home, wash up, eat dinner, do homework, watch television for a while, and go to bed. For the Chinese children there are four main activities: go to the factory where mother is, go to Chinese school, go home and do the homework and chores or watch television, or go to an after-school center.

Most of the after-school centers are located right in the schools, utilizing school facilities to look after the children until their parents come for them at 6:00 P.M. The Chinatown Planning Council (CPC) operates the largest after-school programs in seven of the public schools enrolling large numbers of Chinese children. The centers pick up right where the schools leave off. As soon as the children come into the center, they are served a nutritious snack consisting of juice or milk, fruit or raw vegetables, and cookies or sometimes Chinese pastries.

The children are expected to do their homework while teachers and tutors supervise them. After the homework is done, the children can play, do arts and crafts, take part in skits, and have music lessons; in some of the after-school centers, Chinese lessons are offered. The Chinatown Planning Council after-school centers are staffed by professional personnel, and they provide a secure, creative, and healthy experience for the children of working parents. In addition, a family service worker maintains contact with the families to provide referral services for other problems that arise.

The facilities of the seven CPC after-school centers can accommodate only approximately 1,000 children.[2] The waiting lists are long. The fee is based upon a sliding-scale; the parents pay what they can, but most pay very little. Another 500 children attend after-school centers run by churches and other voluntary organizations. Some are funded and some are not. Those endowed with little money can serve only as baby-sitting agencies to keep the children company or keep them from harm. They cannot provide the professional supervision that the after-school centers mentioned above can. Obviously, the 1,500 slots available are a long way from meeting the needs of the applicants for such services. Parents who cannot get their children admitted to the after-school centers must either take them to the factories or restaurants with them, leave them at home to fend for themselves, or leave the children to look for other after-school diversions from their peers.

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[2] Interview with Charles Wang of the Chinatown Planning Council.

Day Care

Day-care center facilities for preschoolers are equally scarce. As of 1978, only three centers--the Chinatown Day Care Center, the Hamilton-Madison House Day Care, and the Educational Alliance--accommodated about 250 children. In our research in the community, we came across many horror stories of children left alone in apartments. One, a two-year-old girl, was tied up in front of the television every day. Her mother would come back occasionally to check on her.[3] Another three-year-old girl took care of herself, spending her time with the television from morning until her sisters came home from school at 3:00 P.M.[4] A ten-year-old boy was discovered by the school principal[5] to be living alone. His father worked in Philadelphia and came to New York once a week to look in on his son.

Youth Centers

Places where older children can go after school hours are in a constant state of flux. The Community Service Society withdrew from Chinatown in 1976. The YMCA program has almost no participants because it charges a fee for membership. The Youth Consortium consisting of Project Reach, Project Hing Dai (Big Brother-Little Brother), and Young Life was aborted in 1978 when funding was cut off by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council of the City of New York. Only Project Reach was retained under the aegis of the Chinatown Planning Council. A new group, Better Chinatown Project, was founded in 1978 and is housed in an old school building. These two organizations still provide services like tutoring, counseling, recreation, arts and crafts, music and painting, and an opportunity for young people to get together in a supervised, wholesome atmosphere. The Chinese Benevolent Association sponsors basketball tournaments in its gym. However, these few facilities are only skeletal and they are far from filling the need.

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[3] Interview with director of Family Consultation Service Center.

[4] Interview with one of the sisters, a student at the Chinatown junior high.

[5] Interview with Richard Kramer.

Parental Concern

For the immigrant parents, it is a new experience to leave their children without adult supervision. In the home country, the mothers generally did not work, and if they did, invariably there would be any number of relatives or neighbors around to look after the children. Parents are not the only ones who supervise the children's upbringing. Aunts, uncles, grandparents, older siblings all exert some influence. To have to leave their children untended or in someone else's care must be a guilt-inducing experience for the parents.

Findings

1. A significant number of immigrant children and youth worked after school. These even included children at the elementary-school level.

2. The hours were long. Of the high school students surveyed, 32 percent in Chinatown and 27 percent in the satellite community worked twenty hours or more per week.

3. The demands of school and job leave very little time over for recreation or play.

4. In Chinatown, opportunities for socializing, for sports, or for cultural appreciation are extremely limited. Life for the immigrant child is the serious business of school and work. What little time left over is spent on watching television. The streets are unsafe, and social activities, like parties and dances, are few.

5. The lack of experience in knowing how to relate to other people in a social setting may result in what one Chinese-American principal of a New York City high school labeled, "social retardation." To him, symptoms of this malady were quite manifest.

6. A few after-school centers serve approximately 1,500 children in Chinatown. Obviously, these few slots are a long way from meeting the needs of the applicants for such services.

7. The Chinatown youth centers have been in a constant state of flux, here one day and gone the next depending upon funding, which is uncertain from year to year. The facilities are skeletal in relationship to need.

CHAPTER VIII: THE DEVIANT PATH--CHINATOWN GANGS

If there are positive forces that help immigrant children in their transition from one culture to another, there are also negative influences that prey upon the weak and vulnerable. The most pernicious of these are the youth gangs that have terrorized the community.[1] Their wanton shooting and killing, their high-handed extortion, their tactics to coerce other youths to join their ranks, and their total disregard for the safety of innocent bystanders have gripped the community in utter and unspeakable fear.

It is no coincidence that the waxing of the youth gangs has accompanied the phenomenal increase in immigration since 1965. Prior to that time, the *lack* of juvenile offenders among the Chinese had drawn the attention of social scientists and law enforcement officers. Chinese children had been held up as models of behavior and Chinatown was always the safest neighborhood in the city. In the past, restaurants and businesses stayed opened until 1:00 A.M. Now iron gates and metal shutters clang shut over store fronts by 9:00 P.M. Not that daylight inhibits the activities of the gang members; nor does darkness bring them out of the woodwork, it is simply that business owners try to reduce their hours of possible encounter with the gangs.

Youthful Rebellion: The High Road or the Low Road

How does one explain the phenomenon? As long as youth gangs roam the streets, how can we report that Chinese immigrant children are managing quite well after an initial period of difficulty. The answer is that the two groups are separate and apart. The large majority, who are in the schools, are serious and concerned about their future, and they are taking the conventional route through hard work and education. The gang members are more attracted by the lure of easy money, the excitement of the streets, and the camaraderie of the peer group. School work takes a backseat to

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1. In connection with her research under this grant, the author published a separate monograph as a preliminary report on "Gangs in New York's Chinatown," (Department of Asian Studies, City College of New York, 1977) This report gave considerable detail about the gang situation, presenting interviews with the police, community leaders, gang members themselves, social or agency workers, and the press. Thus a multifaceted picture of the gangs was drawn by the people who are daily involved with the gang problem. For detailed information on this subject, consult this work.

these enticements, and the gang member drops out of school or is truant.

What leads some youths astray while most strive diligently to adjust to their new homeland in an exemplary manner? Is there a characteristic profile of the gang member? Are there underlying currents that have given rise to this surge in violent and disruptive behavior? The reasons are many. First among them is the spectacular increase in number of children in the Chinatown community since the liberalization of the immigration laws. As pointed out in Chapters I and III, Chinese children, once a rarity on the American scene, now total more than 20,000 in the New York City school system alone. The Chinese-American population, once a predominantly adult male society, is now balanced out with women and children.

A lack of juveniles naturally means an absence of juvenile delinquents, but the sudden presence of large numbers of young people can embolden those who held back from antisocial behavior before. It is common knowledge that a loner who may hesitate to step out of bounds or protest his treatment will, when he is part of a crowd, muster courage from the group and behave in a manner quite contrary to his usual self. There is no doubt that the increase in number of Chinese teenagers has a direct connection with the upsurge in gang activities.

In his book, Chinese Americans, Stanford Lyman applies a theoretical framework to the youthful rebellions going on in the major Chinatowns of the East and West coasts. He says:

> The rebellion of Chinese youth is not of a single piece and is not explainable solely in terms of an increase in numbers. The growth of America's adolescent Chinese population coincided with a recognition of the importance of ethnicity throughout the country, a social movement in behalf of civil rights for nearly all oppressed groups, and a sometimes ecstatic rejection of Protestant and Confucian ethics in favor of collective and self-awareness, somatic rediscovery, and revitalized sociability. The young Chinese entered upon the American scene at a moment when its own cherished values and traditional verities were undergoing a profound and fundamental interrogation. The "Greening of America" (Reich, 1970) was going on at the same time as the "yellowing" of Chinese-American youth.[2]

Lyman goes on to observe that although, "traditionally, sociologists have focused on youthful criminal gangs as an unfortunate form of delinquency common among certain classes as these youths make their transitional passage from adolescence to adulthood,"[3] he sees the Chinese gang eruption as a form of "social banditry." The Chinese youth observes a discrepancy between professed American ideals and the realities of racism coupled with his own powerlessness. The gap between him and the power structure is very great. He is torn between assimilation, with its material rewards, and the rejection of his own culture and ethnicity. He ponders the psychological price he must pay. During the late 1960s and early 1970s imitation of the tactics of militant blacks was common. Chinese youths watched the Blacks protest and march; after Watts and Atlanta, they saw that the "feds" came running with fistsful of money.[4] They began to question their own passivity and status. It was obvious that there is power in organization, so deviant behavior shifted from petty individual crimes to quasi-politics. The American-born youths quickly grasped the widening opportunities open to them in federally funded programs for poor but qualified members of minority groups. These rebels transferred the scene of their protests from the ghettos to the college campuses. They joined forces with other minority movements--the civil rights movement, the anti-war movement, and the Asian-American movement. They tried to be vocal and visible, and they sought redress and opportunity through the political process.[5]

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[2] Op. cit. (New York: Random House, 1974) p. 160.

[3] Ibid., p. 162.

The malcontents among the American-born and intelligentsia sought the high road through the political process while the new immigrants, left to themselves, handicapped by the language barrier, and ill at ease with the tactics of mass protests and demonstrations, took the low road of crime. They became henchmen of the ultraconservative factions within Chinatown.[6] Primarily, these factions were the tongs and associations that thrived on gambling and the protection racket.

Lyman's theory has, I believe, more applicability to the San Francisco scene than to that in New York City. On the West Coast, an entire generation of Chinese youth had grown up in the United States. Either they were born of war brides who came in during the 1950s or they had come here with their mothers at a young age. A sizable group, they had become so Americanized that they had lost much of their Chinese identity. These were the youths who could assess the social distance between themselves and the power structure, and they vented their dissatisfaction by taking part in the protest movements.

Gang members on the East Coast, on the other hand, are almost exclusively foreign-born immigrants who are having difficulty adjusting to a new way of life in a new country. Disillusioned, they find the easy buck more appealing than the laborious tasks of school and work. They may be coerced into joining a gang against their will or may choose to join because the gang fills a void in their lives. Given a sizable number of vulnerable young people, the tongs quickly seized upon the opportunity to advance their own ends.

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[4] Tom Wolfe, "The New Yellow Peril," Esquire (December 1968) pp. 190-199.

[5] Op. cit., Lyman, p. 167.

[6] Ibid.

Tongs

The tongs are secret societies engaged in illicit activities such as extortion for protection, gambling, prostitution, opium, and drugs. They have been part of the history of the Chinese in the United States since its earliest days.[7] They were the highbinders who imported girls for prostitution. They controlled the opium dens and the gambling parlors. They collected money for protection of legitimate as well as illegitimate businesses. Their origins are rooted in revolutionary activities against the Manchu dynasty. Around the turn of the century when the revolution in China ended, the remnants of the armed insurgents turned to a life of crime.

In the United States the image of the Chinese-American has been tarnished repeatedly by the tong wars that erupted periodically until the 1930s. Those conflicts persisted as rival tongs sought exclusive control over certain streets of Chinatown and certain segments of the Chinese population. For their own safety, the Chinese had to pay protection money to either one or the other tong. Gambling houses in particular allocated a percentage of their profits to the tongs; likewise the opium dens and houses of prostitution. Hatchetmen, employed by the tongs, enforced the decrees of the tong leaders, or highbinders, by splitting open the skulls of adversaries with hatchets.

Whenever the interests of the competing tongs were at odds, open warfare ensued. These wars became so vicious that American authorities threatened to deport en masse the tong leaders and combatants. This deterred the fighting. Common cause in defending China against Japan during World War II united the Chinese in the United States, and led to a lull in tong activity from the 1930s until the 1960s.

In New York, there are two main tongs: the Hip Sing and the On Leong. With the huge influx of new immigrants into Chinatown after 1965, the ground was laid for a comeback for the tongs. Opium was a thing of the past; with the sex ratio becoming more balanced among the Chinese, prostitution was unprofitable; but gambling has continued to flourish. Newcomers, with little outlet for recreation in Chinatown, found excitement and thrills in the bones and the cards. Long hours and hard work brought them a few dollars, but gambling offered the prospect of getting rich quick. In New York's Chinatown, $600,000 easily passes over the gambling tables weekly.

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[7] See [illegible]l Glick and Hong Sheng-Hwa, Swords of Silence (New York: Whittlesey House, 1947); Richard Dillion, The Hatchetmen: Tong Wars in San Francisco (New York: Coward McCann, 1962); and Carol Green Wilson, Chinatown Quest (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1931).

To protect this flourishing industry, the tongs needed strong-arm men. They needed lookouts for raids. They needed guards. They needed escorts for those with large winnings. But more often, they needed people to collect gambling debts. Hatchetmen were passé, whereas young boys, preferably under the age of sixteen, were well suited to their purposes. They were hot-headed and willing to take chances. If they were caught, they were largely immune from severe punishment since the laws of the state until 1978 were extremely lenient toward youthful offenders. Eighteen months was the maximum sentence for murder and when the youth reached sixteen his record was wiped clean. Teenagers could literally commit murder with impunity, and many did.

The Major Gangs

The tongs do not hire boys individually. They contract with a gang leader for the services of the group. Money is paid the gang leader and he apportions it to his followers. Gangs fight over which of them will be in the employ of the tongs, so that, in addition to aggression on behalf of the gambling houses, each gang also has to defend itself against a possible takeover by another gang.

Being in with the right gang means getting good money: $200 to $300 a week, an astronomical sum to a teenager who could hope to earn only a few dollars washing dishes, waiting on tables, or making deliveries. Some receive more and some less depending upon their rank in the gang hierarchy. To prove their worth, the newer recruits fight at the drop of a pin.

Gangs come and go; some may disband, but new ones crop up in their place. Gangs with names like the White Eagles, Quon Yings, and Ernie's Boys had their heyday in the late sixties. By 1971, the Black Eagles and Flying Dragons were the top gangs. The Eagles worked for On Leong, the Dragons for Hip Sing. On Leong has the more profitable turf of Mott Street. Hip Sing controls Pell Street, Division Street, and the Bowery. A lesser gang, the Ghost Shadows, covered East Broadway, Hester Street, and Eldridge Street. In 1973, the Black Eagles enraged the elders of On Leong by extorting money from the same merchants who were paying the tong for protection and by robbing those whom they were paid to protect. The last straw came when an Eagle poured tea down the brocade jacket of an On Leong elder. On Leong withdrew its support of the Black Eagles and installed the Ghost Shadows in their place. The years 1976-1977 were the pinnacle of these two gangs' reign of terror. By 1979, racked by internal dissension, they seemed to be on the way out.

Gang Activities

The level and extent of gang activity is well mirrored in the headlines of the New York press. In the late sixties an occasional article would appear in the papers, but the articles have increased in frequency as the seventies wore on indicating stepped-up activity on the part of the gangs (see Table 8-1).

TABLE 8-1

GANG RELATED ARRESTS OF CHINESE IN
NEW YORK CITY'S FIFTH POLICE PRECINCT, 1955-1978

Year	No.	Year	No.	Year	No.
1955	1	1963	8	1971	47
1956	1	1964	3	1972	58
1957	1	1965	9	1973	112
1958	3	1966	8	1974	100
1959	1	1967	21	1975	85
1960	0	1968	13	1976	135
1961	2	1969	59	1977	74
1962	7	1970	58	1978	68

SOURCE: New York City Police Department, Fifth Precinct.

Instead of confining themselves to protecting gambling interests, the gangs began systematic extortion of legitimate businesses. Either the business made regular payoffs with protection money or the young hoodlums would tear up the store or restaurant, threaten the owner and his family with bodily harm, sit in the premises so that the regular customers would be scared away, eat in the restaurants or take merchandise and not pay, or, as an example to others, shoot the hapless proprietor in cold blood.

Few stores in Chinatown escaped the extortionists. The gang members paced the streets and visited the stores frequently, their usual tactic being to ask for a donation for a "brother" in need. Most businessmen paid up quietly without reporting to the police. To report the incident meant retaliation from the gangs; not to report and to pay off continually meant bleeding to death economically. Without report of the incident, there could be no arrest or prosecution. The situation was nightmarish. The gangs had the merchants by the neck and were strangling them slowly.

To insure their control over certain streets in Chinatown, the gangs had to defend their territory against other gangs. The resulting gang warfare was the most terrifying prospect of all. It was not uncommon for one group to swoop down with guns blazing on members from another gang. Innocent bystanders, caught in the crossfire, often were the victims of such confrontations. The savagery of the gangs was expressed most vehemently when the gangs fought one another. They literally hacked away at one another with cleavers and guns. In one instance, a group of Flying Dragons eating in a restaurant were caught off guard by the entrance of a group of Ghost Shadows. Neither group had their guns with them, so some

Ghost Shadows ran into the kitchen, grabbed a meat cleaver and tried to chop off the leg of a Flying Dragon. The rubouts resulting from intra- or inter-gang rivalries made up most of the murder statistics for deaths attributed to gang violence.

As we have already established, one of the main functions New York's Chinatown serves is as a social gathering place for life's important events: births, deaths, and weddings. Wedding banquets in particular bring friends and relatives from all over the country, and they usually come decked out in their jewelry and finery. The gangs soon seized upon these occasions to rob guests of their money and jewels. They would brazenly walk in amidst the festivities, ask the guests to drop their jewels and money into shopping bags, and just as brazenly walk out. This tactic was also employed in movie houses: gang members were known to walk up and down the aisles collecting watches and wallets from the patrons watching the film. The movie houses consistently denied such activity for fear that such news would kill their business. They paid the gangs heavily for protection from other gangs, but this did not insure them immunity from their own "protectors" or from other gang members trying for a take-over.

In fact, the gang members became so cocky that they often defied the tong leaders themselves, some of whom complained that they had gotten on the back of a tiger and did not know how to get off. An abortive attempt was made by the tongs to disassociate themselves from the gangs by hiring a white security agency to guard the gambling houses and provide merchants protection from the gangs. The gangs responded by throwing bombs into the tong headquarters and by applying for jobs as guards in the security agency. Merchants quickly recognized behind the new uniforms the faces of those who used to extort from them as gang members.

Police Response

The police said that their hands were tied. Only one policeman of Chinese extraction is on the entire city police force. The few that had been hired in a special recruitment campaign were quickly laid off when New York City's budget crunch occurred. Two men in the Fifth Precinct, which covers the principal streets of Chinatown, were assigned to deal with the gangs. They built up thick folders on the gang members and probably knew more about them than the gang members knew about themselves. The two detectives walked among the gangs on the streets and knew them by name and by sight. Yet they made few arrests and obtained fewer convictions.

An attempt was made to ascertain the number of arrests from official sources, such as the Uniform Crime Reports[8] and the computerized crime statistics of the New York Police Department, but these data were so erroneous that they had to be discarded at once. For example, the Uniform

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[8] Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports for the United States (Washington, D.C., issued annually).

Crime Reports stated that there were only five Chinese arrests for homicide and attempted homicide in the entire United States in 1976, whereas the Fifth Police Precinct had twenty-seven arrests in that precinct alone (see Table 8-2).

TABLE 8-2

CHINESE YOUTH ARRESTS BY CRIME IN
NEW YORK CITY'S FIFTH POLICE PRECINCT, 1975-1978

Crime	1975	1976	1977	1978
Murder & Attempted Murder	1	27	5	1
Possession of weapons	19	38	7	15
Assaults	21	13	2	11
Extortion	0	12	13	10
Robberies	14	27	32	9
Burglaries	9	1	0	5
Rapes	15	0	0	0
Other	6	17	15	17
TOTAL	85	135	74	68

SOURCE: New York City Police Department, Fifth Precinct.

Table 8-1 attests to the phenomenal increase in arrests of Chinese youths under twenty-one from the occasional one or few a year to the hundreds of arrests in the 1970s, but these arrests were only the tip of the iceberg. They in no way reflect the actual perpetration of criminal acts in New York's Chinatown. The merchants and residents were simply too scared to report the crimes, and if they did they would back down immediately if they had to go to the police station to file a complaint or had to testify in court. As mentioned previously, juvenile offenders under sixteen years of age usually got off with a slight tap on the wrist even if convicted. They would soon be back on the streets to exact their revenge. In essence, the gangs almost had carte blanche to do whatever they wanted. Over a period of two years (mid-1975 to mid-1977) only one gang member, a Black

Eagle, was sentenced to prison for shooting a Ghost Shadow, and he was convicted only because there were two non-Chinese witnesses to the act.[9]

From January to October 1977, over thirty killings were reported in Chinatown and there may have been more[10] that were not reported, but not one resulted in a conviction. A hired assassin stabbed M.B. Lee, the unofficial mayor of Chinatown, in the stomach for trying to get the Chinese people to testify in court; Lee survived the attempt on his life. To salvage their authority and respect in the community, the police and city administration launched an all-out campaign to find the criminal; it resulted in Chik Keung Pang's arrest and conviction in March 1978.[11] In a way, the capture of the would-be assassin goes to show that the police can obtain results if a concerted effort is made to make sure that crime does not go unpunished. In this instance, the criminal had to be brought to justice because the unofficial mayor was trying to help the police. He also had friends in City Hall. If his would-be assassin escaped punishment, the police and city administrators would look like fools. If the same efforts had been made toward the thirty other unsolved killings that year, the gangs may not have gotten so far out of hand.

Gang Membership

Gang membership is not large and it fluctuates drastically. The police think there are only about 200 to 300 members at the most; 150 or less are hard core.[12] But it only takes an isolated few "Sons of Sam" or "Boston Stranglers" to terrorize an entire city, and New York's Chinatown comprises only a few city blocks. According to a member of the Ghost Shadows there were about 130 members in his gang in 1977; 50 were females. These girls exhibited their pride in being associated with the gang by stripping a section of their dark hair with bleach to give them a white streak across the forehead.

The Eagles, both White and Black, had a total of about 115 members in their groups. The White Eagles are older; the Black Eagles are usually their younger brothers. The Flying Dragons had about 70-80 members, 20-30 of them girls.

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[9] Mark Jacobson, "New York's Other Mafia," Village Voice, (January 31, 1977) p. 16.

[10] Berkeley Rice, "The New Gangs of Chinatown," Psychology Today (May 1977) p. 61.

[11] "Chinatown Stabber Jailed," New York Times (March 7, 1978)

[12] Sung, Gangs in New York's Chinatown, p. 80.

TABLE 8-3

TOTAL ARRESTS OF CHINESE BY CAUSE IN NEW YORK CITY'S FIFTH POLICE PRECINCT, 1975-1978

	Gang Related				Gambling				Other				Total			
Month	1975	1976	1977	1978	1975	1976	1977	1978	1975	1976	1977	1978	1975	1976	1977	1978
Jan.	11	12	4	5	0	0	52	0	4	3	0	7	15	15	56	12
Feb.	17	4	1	7	50	1	0	20	4	9	4	7	71	14	5	34
Mar.	4	2	7	10	15	0	0	4	2	11	10	5	21	13	17	19
Apr.	9	0	14	8	21	49	19	45	9	3	7	7	39	52	40	60
May	11	12	11	8	0	13	31	25	6	8	3	9	17	33	45	42
June	4	12	11	6	0	0	12	10	1	6	5	12	5	18	28	28
July	1	14	3	6	0	0	15	0	2	13	7	3	3	27	25	9
Aug.	10	8	7	1	0	0	31	0	10	6	5	4	20	14	43	5
Sept.	0	10	6	5	0	0	24	15	7	5	7	8	7	25	37	28
Oct.	5	40	3	4	0	0	18	24	5	5	0	3	10	45	21	31
Nov.	12	17	1	6	0	14	5	4	3	1	3	1	15	32	9	11
Dec.	1	4	6	2	0	23	51	1	9	3	5	3	10	30	62	6
TOTAL	85	135	74	68	86	100	258	148	62	73	56	69	233	308	388	285

SOURCE: New York City Police Department, Fifth Precinct.

NOTE: Most offenses committed by Chinese are for gambling or they are gang-related. It seems that as gambling arrests go down, gang related offenses rise.

The gang members are constantly on the lookout for new blood to replenish or bolster their ranks. They hang around the high schools and junior highs looking for likely prospects among teenagers who are having trouble in school. They spot the truants and the dropouts. They want the ones who are physically fit, yet easily cowed and misled. Strong-arm tactics are employed to recruit the youths. Sometimes the girls are kidnapped and made to do the bidding of the gang members. The most terrifying experience of Chinese teenagers is to be confronted by gang recruiters. And to show how unsuspecting and naive children can be trapped in the vicious grip of the gangs, I followed one young boy through his ordeal to show how he, the school authorities, his family, the social workers, and the courts handled the problem. It was fumbling all the way, except for the school.

Case Study - Bip

The day I went to Bip's home, his father told me that his son had left for Hong Kong the previous night. Four policemen had accompanied him and his mother to the airport to see that he got on the plane safely. The police had learned that Bip was marked for "rubbing out." Bip was thirteen years old.

Counselor's Account. I had met Bip in the Chinatown junior high when I inquired if there were some immigrant children who seemed to be having difficulty adjusting. Bip had come to the guidance counselor's attention because of his excessive absences and cuts. She had talked to him on numerous occasions and found that he could hardly read. His record card showed that he was failing in almost every subject, yet she could not believe that Bip was a slow learner or low in intelligence. The counselor had already arranged for Bip to take the communication disorders test at Hunter College, and a social worker was going to take him up there.

An appointment was made for Bip to meet me at the counselor's office. The first time he never showed up. He had cut out right after lunch. He came for the second appointment and we had a long, long chat.

Bip's spoken English was good. He enunciated very clearly and had no accent in spite of the fact that he had been in the country for only three years. Physically, he was big for his age, a little on the plump side, with fair smooth skin; he was not a bad-looking fellow at all. In fact, he was very talkative, extremely open, very innocent, and naive. One could almost describe him as cherubic.

He was in the seventh grade although he had finished only third grade in Hong Kong. He remembered that school work there was very hard for him and that he had been hit by the teacher quite often and sometimes put in a dark room because he did not do his homework. At the junior high, he was taking math, science, social studies, language, art, music, woodshop, and typing. He was not interested in math because he had already learned some of it in the Hong Kong school. He liked social studies. In all his subjects, however, he said he could not read his assignments. He repeatedly told me that he found it difficult to read although I found that he talked easily and readily. He was getting help from a number of sources for his reading. One was the reading lab at the school, to which he had been going for a month. The hours were from 3 P.M. until 6 P.M. According to Bip, the lab had helped him a little, but he had a defeatist attitude and felt that he could not do the work before he even tried.

Bip's Account. Bip told some fancy stories. He said he stole a "madelo" with some kids from an Italian man. When asked what a "madelo" was, he said, "It makes a big bang and can blow this door off." He said he had a gun, but it was broken. He wanted to steal a car because he wanted a car. He went to stay with some gang members once from Sunday until Tuesday. Afterwards, his father would not let him go out on weekends, and he felt that he was a prisoner in his home. When asked what he did when he cut out from school, he said he rode his bicycle around the neighborhood, played ball, went around with his friends. Sometimes he worked delivering papers for a store for which he was paid two dollars an hour.

It was alleged that he and a friend had gone to another school and had threatened a child with a knife. Looking at this young boy of thirteen across the table from me, I could not imagine him hurting anyone. Asked what he wanted to be when he grew up, he said, "A doctor, because a doctor makes a lot of money."

"Who are your friends?" I asked. Bip mentioned an older boy in the main building of the Chinatown junior high school and some Hispanic and black boys. He had Chinese friends as well, but they were not "best friends." One Chinese friend had accompanied Bip to our interview and had sat with us the entire time. The two boys were close, but the second boy was doing quite well in school (90 average), despite the fact that he had been in the United States only two years.

Teacher's Account. I sought out Bip's homeroom teacher, who confirmed my impression that Bip had a defeatist attitude. "Bip believes he cannot succeed. He becomes frustrated very easily. He's basically quit the American educational system. Yet I think he is definitely intelligent."

The teacher filled me in further on Bip's schooling. "This class is made up of what might be called language-deficient children. They have been here too long for the ESL class and are too slow for the regular mainstream class. I teach the students both English and social studies. In English, we work phonetically because Chinese phonetics are obviously different from English phonetics. We work with sounding out words, so that hopefully when they leave here in June they will be able to sound out every English word in an attempt to read it. They will not know all the meanings or all the words because their vocabulary is still rudimentary and will have to be built up gradually."

Is this method effective? Have the children improved their reading ability? The teacher hedged: "About fifteen of the students in this class can easily do the work that is given them. The other ten like Bip who are very deficient should have another teacher work intensively with them. Bip understands everything that is explained to him, and he answers my questions in English, but when it comes to written work he makes a small attempt and then gives up."

Does Bip pay attention in class? Does he misbehave? "Bip seems interested. He pays attention as long as I am verbalizing. If we go to the reading exercises, he will quit and just sit quietly. He is not a discipline problem at all. He is an attendance problem. The first time I heard he was in another school shaking down a kid with a knife I was absolutely shocked. I've been in this school twelve years now, and Bip does not appear to be a typical gang member. I have had other gang members in my class. One was shot in the movies. One was a runner for the gambling houses. All of a sudden he fell down the elevator shaft one day and was killed. Some people say he was executed."

What was the teacher's assessment of the problem? "Frustration is a key factor. Bip needs some sort of praise, some sort of success. He needs to bolster his ego so that when he tells people he is part of a gang, he feels important; this may be the success factor that Bip craves."

Court's Account. A few days later when I inquired about Bip at the school, I learned that he had been absent since I last spoke to him and that he was now under court supervision. Bip's father had petitioned the court to make him a PINS (Person in Need of Supervision) case. The father felt that he could no longer handle his son, and he had asked the court to assume responsibility. I learned that a social worker and legal advisor had been assigned to Bip and that he had appeared before a juvenile court judge. The case was beginning to assume proportions that I had not imagined. I paid a visit to the social worker, having first called Bip's father to obtain permission for both the social worker and the judge to reveal anything about the case.

The social worker and legal advisor felt that it was their obligation and duty to protect Bip's legal interests, which they interpreted to mean that Bip was not to be put into a foster home if they could help it. Being put in a foster home sounded like being sent to prison. The urgency of Bip's plight demanded other courses of action, but neither the social worker nor the legal advisor had alternatives to offer.

The father was pleading for help. He asked if the social worker could find him a private school where he could send Bip to remove him from his present friends and influences, which he thought were leading his son astray. He was willing to pay up to $2,000 per year for tuition, room, and board for a place outside New York City. The social worker had called a number of places, but she told me that the private schools were asking for $5,000. The father could not afford this amount on his meager salary, so he dropped this prospect and tried to keep his son at home. He felt frustrated and disappointed. To send his son back out into the streets or into the school was to put his life in jeopardy. Events were moving too swiftly for the bureaucracy and the family to handle in a leisurely fashion. The father withdrew his son from court supervision and took matters back into his own hands.

Next, I interviewed the Family Court judge who had heard Bip's case. In his eleven years on the bench, the judge had had very few Chinese boys appear before him, but more were coming to his attention lately. He could not recall the particulars of the case, but after reviewing the records he said that the father had first asked for help and that the court had responded by providing a social worker and legal counsel to help Bip work out his problems.

Father's Account. I made an appointment to see the father. I was surprised when he asked me to come at two in the afternoon. I found him living in the heart of Chinatown in a third-floor walk-up apartment taking care of a newborn infant and a little girl of one and a half. One could barely squeeze into the tiny space called an apartment. We sat at the kitchen table that took up about a third of the room. An old gas jet stove, a refrigerator, and a television were the rest of the furnishings. Part of the room had been partitioned off to hold a bed that took up the entire floor space. The only way to get into the room was to climb over the bed. This is where the parents slept. There must have been another bedroom for the three children, but I did not see it. The only space to turn around in was in front of the stove, and I would say it was no bigger than four feet square. There was only one window in the entire apartment, so that it was very dark and dreary inside in spite of the fact that the sun was shining outside.

The father was a very soft-spoken, gentle man judging by the way he fed the baby and handled the little girl. I explained to him that I wanted to know about his son to learn what kind of difficulties immigrant children encounter so that we can devise ways to help others like Bip. The father was very understanding and perfectly willing to cooperate with me. He said he had gone through a very trying period with his son, and that is when he told me that Bip had been escorted to the airport by four policemen the night before. The mother had taken him to Hong Kong to live with relatives. She had given birth to the baby just ten days earlier but Bip's life was in danger and that took precedence. It seemed that he had been peripherally involved with the gangs. He wanted out, but found that the idea was not received with approval by them. He knew who the members were. He knew where they hung out. He knew too much for his own good and, therefore, had to be done away with.

The father was in his forties. He had come to the United States much earlier, but his family did not join him until three years ago. He worked as a cook and his wife worked on his day off in the sewing factory. Most of the time she stayed home to take care of the children.

"Bip didn't like to stay home," said the father. "He always wanted to be out on the streets running around with other boys." I looked around at the cramped living quarters and could well understand why the two rooms held no attraction for a restless teenager. Obviously, family member contacts were close, for the father said he spent whatever time he could talking to Bip, teaching him, and urging him to be a good boy. Apparently the father's words fell on deaf ears, and the father felt totally helpless to keep his son from bad company and harm. In desperation, he had been willing to turn Bip over to the courts.

I asked him if he had ever heard of special agencies such as the Chinese Family Consultation Center or Project Reach (a pre-delinquent agency) that might have helped him. I also inquired whether he had kinfolk who might have exerted some control over Bip, but the father said he was so ashamed of his son's behavior he did not want anyone in Chinatown to learn about it.[13]

Apparently, Bip's flirtation with the gangs brought about a drastic change in the family. The mother would eventually return to the United States, but her son was to remain in Hong Kong. Meantime, the father could not work because he had to care for the younger children. And I knew Bip would be very unhappy because he had told me that he did not like Hong Kong and that he had been very happy when he heard that he was coming to the United States. Besides, I think he had forgotten a great deal of his Chinese; when I spoke to him in Chinese, he told me that he didn't understand Chinese very well any more. If Bip had to start all over again in Chinese school in Hong Kong, he would have to make another drastic adjustment without his parents beside him. His disillusionment with school and his flirtation with the gangs had cost him very dearly, but at least he did not pay with his life.

Summation. The events in Bip's case followed each other swiftly. Altogether, it was a matter of mere weeks from the time I first met Bip to his forced departure from the United States. It is my firm belief that had he not left the country, he would have been another gang casualty. I followed the case in all its ramifications because it is a classic example of how young, naive teenagers are trapped in a vicious cycle from which it seems difficult, if not impossible, to extricate themselves once they go beyond a certain point. Events start out simply enough: A young boy cannot handle his school work because of a reading disability. The first symptoms are cutting classes and truancy. The more exciting world of the streets beckons, and a young boy in his early teens cannot resist. He is all the more vulnerable if he comes from a sheltered family because he is naive. The home environment, in spite of loving parents, is too cramped for a growing boy who needs room to run and play. One could hardly turn around in his apartment, much less run and play.

In this instance, Bip's mother was home and his father was caring and concerned. In this respect Bip was fortunate. But being truant meant that he was a prime target for gang recruitment. He could have become a hard-core gang member, shooting, extorting, killing, and perhaps ending up being killed himself or incarcerated. Bip only flirted with the gangs and he did not like what he saw, but the gangs would not let go. Their code was total commitment or death.

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[13] Loss of face and feelings of shame are such strongly ingrained Chinese cultural traits that they often obstruct realistic solutions to problems. There is a tendency for the persons involved to try to cover up the problem by not recognizing it or letting anyone know about it. At the same time, persons trying to help are hampered in their efforts by repeated denials that anything is wrong.

What about societal assistance? The school, in its way, did try to help with the reading lab and the special class. Did the courts, the social worker, or the legal advisor help Bip or the distraught parents who were beside themselves with worry? The important thing was to remove Bip from the reach of the gang members who were out to get him, whereas the social worker wanted to keep him at home. She was operating with mistaken notions, and it is my belief that she did not or could not devote too much time to finding a reasonable private school in which to place Bip even for a short period of time. If the father had turned to some of the Chinatown family agencies, they would have understood the urgency of the situation. Agencies like Project Reach were set up to help teenagers stay out of gangs. On their staff are street workers who know the gang members, who know the gang mentality and traditions, and who are experienced in dealing with situations like these. An agency no longer in existence, Project Hing Dai (Big Brother/Little Brother), was set up to work directly with the hard-core gang members. In many instances, they were able to defuse potential gang fights by acting as intermediaries. As effective as such agencies may be, the father did not want other Chinese to know about his son's misconduct. In Bip's case, the police were alert in learning about the contract on his life and gave the parents ample warning. The decision to send Bip back to Hong Kong was a drastic step. Its impact on the family may be shattering. On the other hand, Bip may be considered fortunate in having escaped with his life, but the consequences were overwhelming, considering the small seed from which the problem sprang.

Gloomy Employment Outlook

In chapters IV and VII data were presented showing that large numbers of students worked after school and on weekends. Such a large percentage with jobs might give the impression that obtaining employment was no problem. Most of the jobs that the students held were connected with the restaurant business, garment factories, or grocery stores, all of them traditional Chinese occupations with very limited potential. If the immigrant youths cannot make it in school, they know they are going to be stuck with dead-end jobs like peeling shrimp and washing dishes. When they find school work too difficult and they cannot get special help, they will be tempted to take the seemingly easy road to easy money. This point was brought out in my conversation with two hard-core gang members. Both of them had had dishwashing jobs that paid about $100 a week. Now they boast they can make, or take, $100 in one minute by extorting from the Chinatown businesses.

Gang Threat

The gang threat is a constant cloud hanging over the heads of Chinese youth living in Chinatown. Parents hurry their sons home from school and forbid them to go out to play. Many want desperately to get out of Chinatown, and they made this statement very emphatically to me and my research associate. The gang threat was just not something one could ignore. As a former Project Reach director said, "If you live in Chinatown, even an ordinary kid will find it hard not to come into contact with the gangs in one way or another. If you are not a jock, you're in a gang. If you are not in a gang, you'd better be protected. . . ."[14] One simply cannot go to school, mind one's own business, and go home unscathed. Boys would get waylaid or beaten up in school, in the schoolyard, on the way to school, in the playgrounds, or on the streets. They are even afraid to go to the bathroom. Young teenagers had to be part of a group for protection. This was another reason why boys joined, and once in the gang they followed the group; there was no turning back.

Case Study - Won and Yip

Dean's Account. At the satellite community junior high school, the dean of boys who had been with the school for fourteen years could remember only two cases of problem Chinese boys. One was already dead, "executed" in gangland style five years earlier. The other was enrolled in school at the time of my research.

I was especially intrigued by this young boy because he had a brother one year younger than he, who was his exact opposite. They had the same parents, lived in the same room, came to the United States at the same time, went to the same school, yet the problem child, whom we shall call Won, was completely different from his brother, whom we shall call Yip.

As the dean pointed out, Won's case was not a serious one and, if he were not of Chinese origin, he wouldn't even stand out from the hundreds like him who came into the dean's office regularly. The telltale signs were truancy, cuts, and poor school work. When I spoke to Won, he had been in the United States for four years. The family spoke Mandarin rather than Cantonese, and they had migrated from Taiwan. Won had already forgotten most of his Chinese, and he admitted that he was having trouble with English in spite of the fact that he had attended English school in Taiwan before coming to this country. He was not doing well in school.

Interviews with Won and Yip. Won was a small-framed boy, thin, and very dark in complexion. At first I thought he was of mixed blood, but he said his tan came from the beach and from being out in the ballpark a great deal.

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14. Sung, Gangs in New York's Chinatown, p. 10.

When I met Won and Yip I thought the two brothers were twins, except that Yip had a light complexion compared with Won's. Both were of the same height, same build, and had the same features. Although at thirteen Yip was a year younger than Won, he was in eighth grade while Won was in seventh. Won had been put back a year and Yip had skipped a grade. Yip was an excellent student and highly praised by his teachers and his mother. The boys shared a room, but Won expressed a strong dislike for his brother. They did not play together, nor would Won go to his brother for help with his school work. Recreational facilities were no problem in their neighborhood. Both brothers had many friends to play with, but Won chose his friends from another school--a high school in the adjacent town. His best friend was white and older than he. They would go to the beach or go fishing or go to the movies by bus. Sometimes they would not come home until ten in the evening. Yip's friends, on the other hand, were a grade below him. They were from the same school, but he kept his friends from his former class when he skipped to the eighth grade.

In my interviews with the boys, I detected what I think is a significant factor in the differences in their behavior. When they first arrived in New York, they were put in different classes. Yip said he was utterly lost until another Chinese boy in his class befriended him and helped him out. Won had no such friend. When he had difficulty understanding, there was no one to help him. He began to fall further and further behind in his school work. Won exhibited a strong hostility toward his brother. He may have been jealous of Yip's achievement.

The Mother's Account. The parents had been in the United States for six years. They had come first and sent for their children two years later. Both parents were college graduates. Before they emigrated, the father worked as a ship's engineer; the mother worked for the U.S. Army as an English secretary. Now she worked as a cashier in a New Jersey restaurant. On her day off, she invited me to their home.

The mother was a lovely woman in her late thirties. The family lived in a modern apartment house where the faces of the tenants showed a wide variety of ethnic origins. The three-and-one-half-room apartment was clean and well kept. There were two bicycles for the boys in the living room. Rent and utilities came to about $325 per month.

The mother drove to work six days a week from her home in Queens to a restaurant in New Jersey (more than an hour's drive). She left the house around 10 A.M. and came home after midnight. When the boys came home from school, they were to play until dinnertime when the maternal grandmother, who lived nearby, would come to fix their dinner and stay with them until 10 P.M.

I asked the mother why she did not move closer to her place of work. She said she wanted to be near her own mother, who could look after the boys in the afternoons. Asked why didn't she find work closer to home, she said she could earn more in the restaurant, which was owned by a relative. Yet when calculated by the hour, she was earning less because she was putting in a twelve-hour day plus two hours commuting time. In addition, the car was an extra expense. To my mind, the mother was qualified for a better job since she was a college graduate and could express herself well in English. Yet she was timid about seeking employment in a non-Chinese setting.

She said she and her husband had once owned and operated a restaurant, but it was not a success because they were inexperienced in this line of work. When they had the restaurant, the boys would come home from school and help out. When the business failed, the father went out of town to train as a chef in a niece's restaurant. Neither parent thought about resuming his or her former career so that the family could be reunited. Instead, they sank into restaurant occupations for which they had no experience and no aptitude. They stayed in such occupations because restaurant work is a conventional field for the Chinese. This disinclination to explore or get out of the few traditional occupations is extremely strong and is a barrier to the solution of some of their problems.

I asked Won if he wanted to go back to Taiwan; he said yes. The reason: his father was there. It turned out, however, that his father was not in Taiwan. The mother said her husband was in California. The brother said he was in Mississippi. I did not know whom to believe. The fact that family members live apart from one another is not uncommon in Chinese-American families. It does not mean that the parents are maritally separated or divorced. When asked who was his hero, Won replied, "My father." Obviously, the boy missed his father.

Won's mother said she wished her husband were in New York and that she did not have to go to work so she could stay home and take care of her boys. She confessed that she did not know how to handle her son. She scolded him; she hit him. She sent him away to summer camp, but he came back the next day. She threatened to send him back to Taiwan or to send him away to Mississippi to a friend who had three boys and was willing to let Won live with them. He refused to go. She appealed to Won's love for her and his grandmother. She did not give him an allowance. He had to ask her for spending money, but somehow he had money to take the bus to the beach or go to the movies. Nothing worked. Won was frequently truant from school, and he came home late. The mother was very concerned about her son, but she felt helpless. "Everytime Won is absent from school, the dean at school calls me," she said. "If you misbehave in Taiwan, the school metes out the punishment; it does not keep calling the family. Here, the school cannot do anything with the boy. I can't either."

This rebellious attitude by their offspring is very difficult for immigrant parents to handle. It is a new experience for them to be confronted by a disobedient and disrespectful child. By and large, Chinese immigrant children still retain a strong measure of filial piety and respect for the parents. When they first arrive in this country, they are still obedient. That is why I could only find one case of misbehavior in the satellite junior high among the seventh graders.

In checking back with the family a year later, I found that the father was still absent from the home and the mother had the same job. Won had been sent to a private boarding school outside of New York City so I could not ascertain how he was making out. Yip continued to do well in his studies and had gone on to high school.

A Comparison: Chinatown and Satellite Community

Parallels cannot be drawn between Bip, who lived in Chinatown, and Won, who lived in a satellite community. Obviously, Won's parents came from a much higher socioeconomic and educational background; nonetheless, both fathers worked in restaurants. Won's family was Mandarin-speaking; Bip's was Cantonese-speaking. Both boys had best friends who were not Chinese. When Bip fell behind in his school work and became a truant, he quickly became a target recruit for the gangs. Gang affiliation is for keeps, even for those who join in naiveté. Bip's parents were neither sophisticated nor well-off enough to find a boarding school for their son. Their only recourse was to send him to relatives in Hong Kong. The consequences of his poor marks and truancy were much greater than those for Won. Won's mother had also thought of sending her son back to Taiwan, but in the end she managed to place him in a private boarding school and keep him in this country. Obviously, she must have had some financial reserves to be able to do so. But what is fascinating is how two sons from the same womb and same circumstances can react so differently to their common immigrant experience.

Hong Kong Origin

Almost without exception, the New York Chinese gang member is an immigrant youth from Hong Kong. He may have been exposed to the pseudo-Western influence of that polyglot city and absorbed the worst of Western culture from it. Gang activity is also rampant there. Some people wonder whether there may be connections between New York gangs and the "black society" or Triad society in Hong Kong.

Other factors may explain the predominance of Hong Kong emigrants among gang members. Since the Hong Kong youths speak Cantonese and those from Taiwan speak Mandarin, the language barrier would serve to separate the two groups. Until the United States recognized Mainland China in 1979, very few people were allowed to leave the country, so there were few immigrants from the mainland. Besides, the commission of crime both on the mainland and in Taiwan is more severely punished than in Hong Kong, so that factor may have conditioned emigrants from these places to refrain from criminal acts.

Environmental Contagion

The concept of environmental contagion does have relevance to gang behavior and membership. Living in the Lower East Side of Manhattan where Chinatown is located, the Chinese teenager is exposed daily to behavior like vandalism, hanging out, fighting, mugging, truancy, and aggression. The point was brought out very clearly to me in my conversation with a Puerto Rican sociologist who lived in the Chinatown area and who went to the same schools used in our research. When he talked about the Puerto Rican gangs of his childhood, his eyes lit up and his whole expression became animated. He confessed that he was "too cowardly" to take part in the gang exploits in his neighborhood, but he hung out with gang members because he was fascinated by their pranks, their deeds, and their fighting. He would listen in rapt attention to the gang members as they boasted of their exploits, and secretly he admired and envied their bravado. Since he was a good student he served their purpose by helping some gang members with their school work and by being a good listener.

The primary code of ethics in the gangs is: Never "rat." This sociologist was witness to or knew about many gang activities, but he never told. He was suspended from school three times because he had information that the school authorities wanted but would not reveal it. After each suspension, his star rose higher with the gang members, and to this day, even as a college instructor, the sociologist believes firmly that his suspensions were worth the esteem he had gained in the eyes of his peers.

He lived in a housing project directly across the street from the junior high school in Chinatown used in our study. He said that from his window he used to see marauding gangs throwing stones through the school windows and vandalizing school property. He also watched from his safe perch the gang fights that took place in the small park across from the school. These events were thrilling spectacles to the teenage boy, and if he had not been such a good student and had he not found satisfaction in his studies, he would have easily opted for the excitement of the gang life. The lure of being a part of the gangs is very strong--especially at the preadolescent age. During this period, boys show a pronounced tendency to engage in team activities. It is of utmost importance for them to be part of a peer group.[15]

If a Chinese immigrant teenager comes into a neighborhood where he is daily exposed to gang activities, and if his character and home defenses are weak, he may easily succumb to the gang contagion.

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[15] Paul Hanley Furfey, The Gang Age (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1928).

A Lull--Hopefully, Maybe

By 1978, gang activity in New York's Chinatown seemed to slacken. Five bullets were pumped into the leader of the Ghost Shadows the summer before, but he survived the attack. Within the gang's own ranks, members were vying to take over the leadership, and this brought about a three-way split. About a dozen gang members were languishing in jail as a result of a stepped-up police offensive. But most important of all, the police Morals and Vice Squad were busting the gambling joints. Raid after raid kept the gamblers off balance and dried up the money for the gang members. How long these raids will continue and how effective they will be is another story. An amusing, but ironic picture appeared in the newspaper showing a policeman guarding a gambling establishment that had just been closed down by the police. Behind him, in full view, was an announcement posted on the door. In Chinese characters incomprehensible to the policeman, it gave prospective gambling patrons the new address of the gaming tables. This goes to show that the lack of bilingual personnel on the police force can seriously hamper law enforcement efforts in the Chinese community. Worse yet, it made a laughing stock of the police in a culture where "face" is such an important matter.

Preventive Measures

To repeat, it is impossible for a young boy living in Chinatown not to come in contact with gangs. What immunity can we provide these young lads? How can we protect them from this contagion that infects New York? We vaccinate them against smallpox and polio, but we do not give them any protection from the disease of gangs. We do not warn them what to expect nor tell them how to protect themselves from the gangs. A newcomer is suddenly confronted in the streets, in the school yard, or in the lunchroom with an ultimatum to join or else. How does a thirteen- or fourteen-year-old handle this kind of situation? Does he panic? Refuse to go to school? Join another group for protection? Capitulate? Tell his parents or school authorities?

Teenagers are not mature or sophisticated enough to deal with the problem on their own. Even adults are not, and the wrong decision may have disastrous consequences. A recommendation would be for the schools to drill the students every semester in gang prevention education, much as they drill for fire emergencies. Show the young boy the tactics used by the gangs for recruitment. Use role-playing to show how to withdraw from confrontations. Tell him where he can go for help. Point out the dangers of gang involvement.

Defusing the problem at its source is the most effective method. Police raids on the gambling establishments have reduced gang activity. More effective law enforcement can deter crime if the gangs no longer feel that they have a free hand to terrorize the community. The police cannot expect the victims to come forward and point the finger at perpetrators when their lives and property are at stake. Surely police science has other means of ferreting out criminals. Increased police efforts in late 1977 were successful in putting about a dozen gang members behind bars. They can make the streets of Chinatown safe again.

The Chinese community has lived through a reign of terror, and it is hoped that gang activity has subsided. At any one time, there were about two to three hundred members in the gangs out of more than 20,000 Chinese children of school age in the five boroughs of New York City. How do we reconcile the splendid record of the immigrant children and youths in the schools with the flagrant behavior of the gang members? The answer is that gang members are not in the schools where they belong but out in the streets terrorizing others.

Findings

1. The rise of youth gangs in New York's Chinatown has brought about a veritable reign of terror in the community.

2. Contributing factors to this phenomenon are:
    a. The sudden influx of large numbers of immigrant youths and teenagers.
    b. The tongs and gambling establishments making use of young boys to do their dirty deeds.
    c. The forced recruitment of many who really do not want to join.
    d. The leniency of state laws pertaining to juveniles.
    e. The lure of easy money versus hard work.
    f. The lack of effective law enforcement.
    g. The inability of some new immigrants to keep up with their school work.
    h. The lack of recreational facilities for the excess energies of the teenagers.
    i. The contagion of gang behavior in the neighborhood.
    j. The lack of suitable jobs for young people.

These factors, in and of themselves, may not have caused the excesses of gang behavior witnessed in Chinatown in the past decade, but combined in the boiling cauldron of a community trying to absorb large numbers of new immigrants, the results were explosive.

3. Gang activities include serving as henchmen to the "tongs," extorting from businessmen, recruiting by coercive tactics other teenagers to join their ranks, inter- and intra-gang fighting which have resulted in most of the gangland killings, and robbing Chinese patrons.

4. Until 1978, the gang members operated with impunity. The community lived in fear. Business losses were great, and the police said they were helpless without community support. However, when the police did crack down, they proved that vigorous law enforcement can alleviate the problem.

5. Almost without exception, gang members are immigrant youths. Teenagers who cannot keep up with their school work are particularly susceptible to gang recruitment. Once in the gang, it is very difficult to get out.

6. Urgently needed are preventive measures to help the young people stay out of gangs. These include more recreational facilities, gang-prevention education in the schools, more options in employment opportunities, tutoring help for students who are having difficulty with their school work, but most important of all, the drying up of sources of money that feed the gangs.

CHAPTER IX: PEER GROUPS

Although peer groups can be the villains dragging the confused, misled, and sometimes unwilling youngsters into gangs or otherwise leading them astray, peer groups can also be extremely supportive and helpful to the newcomer. This point was highlighted in the case of Won and Yip, the two brothers mentioned in Chapter VIII, one of whom was an exemplary student, the other a truant and discipline problem. Yip quickly found a friend who helped him in school, whereas Won, the truant brother, had no one.

Peer Group Support System

Mrs. Virginia Kee, who has taught in the public schools in Chinatown for more than fifteen years, particularly recommended a peer-group support system as the answer to the gang problem as well as to the pervasive phenomenon of absent parents in Chinese immigrant families. She said:

> I've observed the teenage scene for many years, and I have noticed that when the immigrants first come in, if they can build themselves a support system, then they can be strong enough to withstand being drawn in, pulled in, or pushed into the gang system. But that support system must be built up and encouraged when they first come to school.
>
> Perhaps they had a support system in Hong Kong in grandparents or parents who were able to help them solve their problems. When they come to the United States, the parents are so busy they don't know what is happening at school. They don't really understand this society. They can't give that same comfort to the youngsters because the parents themselves are struggling. How much can they give in the way of encouragement and support to the children? Very little, although the love and caring is there. Somehow, the ones who do well, I have noticed, are the ones who can pull themselves together and provide a peer support system for each other throughout the difficult years. The person who does not belong to this type of situation will soon seek this type of support from the gangs.
>
> I try to encourage the formation of these peer groups in my class. That means when they are in the playground, they will be there to help each other if someone comes and tries

> to intimidate or extort money from them. They will be there together when they have a problem, and they don't know how to solve it. They will tell each other where the library or post office is. They will share whatever information they have with one another. They will help each other with college applications. They will tell each other what tests count and which teacher is helpful. This way they learn from one another. A person is so much stronger when he has that.

"Willard W. Hartup, director of the University of Minnesota's Institute of Child Development, is among those who view the quality of a child's interaction with friends as a powerful diagnostic index. 'Among the most sensitive indicators of faulty development,' he observes, 'are failure by the child to engage in the activities of the peer culture, and to occupy a relatively comfortable place in it.'"[1]

> Because peer relationships convey so much about a child's potential for emotional difficulties, it is hardly surprising that there is embedded in them, too, the seeds of healthy development as well. 'There are some necessities in children's development,' says Hartup, 'that require interaction with coequals--that is, individuals who have the same kind of developmental status and competencies in the cognitive and social areas as they do. The relations between adults and children have evolved to serve a very special set of functions--to ensure basic survival, to help keep the child safe from physical danger and harm, and to help build relations with authority figures. But in some very critical areas of adjustment, relations with coequals are the key.
>
> Many contemporary child development experts would agree. The imprint of peers on the child's personality is second only in importance to that of parents, and in some areas, it is actually predominant. It is largely through the child's interactions with peers that many of life's most important attitudes and behaviors are shaped in the young--for example, learning to find sexual expression, to display and modulate aggressive instincts, to live by ethical standards, even to overcome disabling fears and anxieties and gain a sense of emotional security.[2]

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1. Julius Segal and Herbert Yahraes, A Child's Journey (New York: McGraw Hill, 1978) p. 234.

2. Ibid., p. 237.

Reverse Roles of Parent and Children

The comments of both Mrs. Kee and Dr. Hartup about harnessing the positive aspects of peer influence are especially à propos to the Chinese immigrant family, in which, as we have already observed, the parents tend to lose a great deal of the respect and authority that they had in the old country when they come to the United States. As soon as the children come to this country, they enter school and are exposed to American ways. They begin to learn English and are not as afraid as their parents to venture out and get around. They are exposed to hours of television, and their eager young minds quickly absorb the message of the medium. The new ideas and ways of the American people are quite different from those of their parents, who must provide the rice for the dinner table by long, hard hours of work. Invariably, the father must take a job on a lower rung of the occupational ladder than the one he held in the old country, (see fathers' occupations, Table 10-1) and he suffers from loss of status and self-esteem. The parents simply do not have the same opportunity as their children to learn English, so they are dependent upon their children to communicate with the outside world. The child takes the mother to the store, answers the telephone, interprets the gas bill, translates letters, and deals with many of the day-to-day situations in which the parents are totally bewildered and incapable of coping with. Instead of the child looking to his parents for guidance, support, and leadership, the roles are reversed. Under these conditions, parental respect and authority are undermined. To fill the vacuum left by the parents, peer groups become increasingly important.

In our questionnaire administered to recent immigrant Chinese high school students, we asked: When you have a problem like the ones given below, whom do you go to? We had anticipated that they would probably turn to different people depending upon the nature of the problem, so three types of problems were used as examples: school work, skin (medical), and future career. The responses are given in Table 9-1.

TABLE 9-1

PERSONS TURNED TO WHEN FACED WITH PROBLEM BY CHINESE IMMIGRANT STUDENTS IN HIGH SCHOOL BILINGUAL PROGRAMS

	No One		Father		Mother		Sibling		Friend		Teacher		Total
Problem	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	100%
School Work	20	9	14	6	19	8	58	26	79	35	34	15	224
Skin Problem	41	19	18	8	98	46	29	14	26	12	2	1	214
Future Career	20	10	42	21	25	13	33	17	76	38	3	2	199
Total	81	13	74	12	142	23	120	19	181	29	39	6	637

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

It is obvious that more respondents turn to their friends or siblings except when it is a medical problem. In that case, the children will still look to their mother primarily. But whether it is an immediate issue of school work or one involving future career, the immigrant youths turn to their peers, and more often to their friends than to their siblings.

Drastic Departure from Cultural Norm

This phenomenon can be said to be a distinct departure from the Chinese cultural norm and it calls for major adjustment on the part of both immigrant parents and children. In traditional Chinese society, stress is put upon the vertical relationships within the family. Ties between parents and children are the strongest; they are family ties, hence permenent and immutable. One is born into a family and one's position within it is secure.

TABLE 9-2

FRIENDS OF CHINESE IMMIGRANT STUDENTS IN HIGH SCHOOL BILINGUAL PROGRAMS

	Males (131)		Females (139)	
Type of Friend	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Close friend	33	25	22	16
Female friend	4	3	60	43
Male friend	59	45	11	8
American-born Chinese friend	21	16	24	17
Foreign-born Chinese friend	58	44	64	46
Black friend	0	0	0	0
Puerto Rican friend	0	0	2	1
White friend	1	1	2	1
No response	39	30	38	28

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

NOTE: Of course many students had more than one friend so that total adds up to more than 131 males and 139 females, and percentages add up to more than 100.

In the dominant American culture, the peer group exerts a very strong pull against the family at a very early age. To be psychologically normal in the Western sense, one must gradually detach oneself from one's parents and seek a niche among one's own peers. Whereas parental affection is taken for granted, peer acceptance is a horizontal relationship that must be worked at.[3] There is a great deal of anxiety attached to being accepted and liked by one's classmates, playmates, colleagues, and friends. Family ties provide a cushion of permanence and security, but peer relationships are ever changing and changeable.

When their children begin to put distance between them, even to feel ashamed of them, the immigrant parents become very upset and chagrined. Before emigrating, they enjoyed respect and obedience. After coming to this country they begin to sense that their children are slipping away from them, and their sorrow is great.

Friends

Do you have a close friend? Only 33 out of 131 males and 22 out of 139 females said yes (see Table 9-2). Through the high school years, most of the students we surveyed had friends of their own sex and very few dated (see Table 9-3). Of the males, two-thirds had never or seldom dated. Of the females, one-half had never or seldom dated.

TABLE 9-3

FREQUENCY OF DATING BY CHINESE IMMIGRANT STUDENTS IN HIGH SCHOOL BILINGUAL PROGRAMS

	Male		Female	
Frequency	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Never	50	38	43	31
Seldom	37	28	30	22
Occasionally	25	19	46	33
Frequently	9	7	12	9
No response	10	8	8	6
Total	131	100	139	100

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

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[3] Francis Hsu, Blanche G. Watrous, and Edith Lord, "Culture Pattern and Adolescent Behavior," International Journal of Social Psychiatry vol. 7, no. 1 (1961) p. 199.

Immigrant youths are not as accustomed to the free and easy intermingling of the sexes as Western teenagers are. Only one generation removed from their parents, whose marriage may have been match-made with go-betweens, they are still shy and reserved. Though these young people may long for association with members of the opposite sex, they are still too inhibited to be comfortable in a dating situation. The awkwardness of the Chinese male on a date was brought out by Melford Weiss in his article, "Selective Acculturation and the Dating Process: The Patterning of Chinese-Caucasian Interracial Dating": "Chinese-American girls report that getting-to-know-you chatter with most Chinese-American boys is basically shallow and tends to revolve around common experiences as Chinese. Males are often considered to be egocentric and to rarely consider the girl as an equal partner in a common dating activity. . . . Chinese-American dating activities are often limited to evening hours and to private or predominantly Chinese settings with the drive-in movie a favorite. . . ."[4] Nevertheless, dating is such an important part of the high school years that these young people must feel the strain of the bicultural conflict.

Segregation

Immigrant teenagers tend to stick with others like themselves. The males chose foreign-born Chinese males as friends and the females chose foreign-born females as friends. That some chose American-born members of the same sex as friends is encouraging and refutes somewhat the contention that there is a sharp cleavage between the American-born and the foreign-born. A fact stands out with respect to socializing with members of other ethnic groups. Hardly any immigrant student had black, Puerto Rican, or white friends. This separatism among the racial groups was especially evident in our school visits and observations of the children and youths in the lunchrooms and at play. In the lunchrooms, the various ethnic groups did not mix at all: The Chinese children had their own tables; the black children sat with other blacks, and the Hispanics with their own kind. The sexes also sat apart although the tables were not delineated for boys or girls. The boys just naturally went to one end of the lunchroom, and the girls sat at the other end.

There was usually a great deal of horseplay among the students in the lunchroom while they lined up for their lunches. The Chinese immigrant students were no less boisterous than the others, hitting the fellows and teasing the girls. While standing in the lines, the Hispanic boys would tease the Chinese girls, but after they got their lunches, each group went to its own table and the interaction between the races ceased while they ate.

After gulping down their lunches in great haste, the students would run out to the playgrounds to play ball, run around, or talk with their friends. Others would go to the gym to play ball. On the occasions when I watched the boys and girls at play in the Chinatown junior high school gym, I noticed that the Chinese students would throw the basketball into the basket at one end of the court, while the Hispanics and blacks shared the other basket. It was as if the baskets were marked "Chinese" and "Hispanic." An invisible boundary separated the groups. They simply did not mix.

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[4] In Amy Tachiki, et al, eds., Roots: An Asian American Reader (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 1971) pp. 37-43.

The same held true for the Chinatown high school although the separatism was not so pronounced in the satellite community junior high. The Chinese students were scattered in all sections of the classes, so there was ample opportunity for them to mix with other groups. In checking through the class rosters, I found no more than six Chinese names in any one section or class. There was no opportunity for me to observe any out-of-class interaction between the ethnic groups at the satellite community high school. The school ran on an end-to-end double session with no lunch period and no recess period. After school the students went home.

The bilingual classes tend to separate the groups along ethnic lines. Since they are separated for lessons throughout the day, there is very little opportunity for the various groups to intermingle socially. Drastic cutbacks in the New York City school budget during this period forced the elimination of many after-school programs that might have provided more opportunity for intermingling. These would have been intramural sports, recreational clubs, hobby groups, handicraft classes, school trips, dances, and other social events.

This tendency to stick with one's own group is a deterrent to reaching out to the larger society in which one must eventually find oneself. Unless one is content to be bound to Chinatown or a narrow circle of Chinese friends, adjustment to the wider society later is necessary but will prove more difficult after graduation than it was during the school years. Part of the responsibility for this segregation falls on the shoulders of the Chinese children and their parents, who discourage social interaction with non-Chinese because they are suspicious of foreigners and fearful that their own ways may be undermined by contact with other groups. But the eventual consequences will be that the Chinese find themselves very ill at ease in any mixed social setting. As I have pointed out in my study, A Survey of Chinese-American Manpower and Employment, advancement and upward mobility beyond a certain level will depend more upon social factors than on competence.[5] To be uncomfortable in a non-Chinese social setting is a psychological as well as an economic barrier to one's well-being later on in life. Neither school nor parents should neglect the social aspects of a child's upbringing.

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5. (New York: Praeger, 1976), p. 64.

Findings

1. Peer groups are assuming a much larger and more important role in the lives of Chinese immigrant children and youth than they formerly occupied under traditional Chinese culture. Whereas children used to look to their parents and elders for direction and counsel, they now turn to their peers.

2. In their choice of friends, Chinese immigrant children tend to choose someone of their own sex and own ethnic group as well as someone who is foreign-born like themselves. There is very little socializing or intermingling with other groups.

3. Dating is an infrequent and probably unfamiliar experience for the newly arrived Chinese young people in high school.

4. The separatism and isolation of the Chinese children may create problems of awkwardness in a non-ethnic setting later in life.

CHAPTER X: THE IMMIGRANT FAMILY

Throughout this report, our hypothesis has been that immigration is a powerful agent, causing changes that have a ripple effect upon all aspects of life. Even that most stable of Chinese institutions--the family--has metamorphosed in the new land of the United States, departing from the idealized, Confucian, traditional models described in fiction and in sociological studies about the Chinese family in China.[1] The families of the immigrants who came to this country have always been distinctive in that:

- They have had a long history of dismemberment.
- Females have played a larger and more independent role.
- Families are smaller in size than the traditional Chinese family.
- The births of children are more widely spaced.
- There may be two distinct sets of children, one older and reared in China, another younger and born in the United States.
- The age gap between husband and wife may be great.
- Family reunification in this country has been in relays.

Dismemberment

One of the most peculiar features of the Chinese immigrant family has been the prolonged separation of the men from their parents, wives, and children. As Charles Frederick Marden put it,[2] such a family was mutilated or missing a member; it was not whole. The men were in this country while their wives and children stayed in China. To a large extent, the reason for this was initially that the men intended to come to this country for only a short while to earn sufficient money and return to their family hearth in the homeland. Before this original intent could be modified, the exclusion laws against Chinese immigration froze the situation, making it economically unfeasible or legally impossible for the women to come. As is well known, Chinese immigration to the United States, for almost a hundred years, was predominantly adult males. In 1890, the sex ratio was 2679:100, or approximately twenty-seven males to every Chinese female.[3] Even as late as 1970, the sex ratio was unbalanced with 110 males to every 100 females. Obviously, there was not even the slightest resemblance of family life for these men deprived of the conjugal relationships with their wives, the presence of their loved ones, and the comforts of home. The men led lonely, celibate lives. On the other hand, they were family men responsible for the support of their families. Duty and obligation kept their noses to the grindstone, and if they were fortunate they managed a trip or two back to their homes over the years.

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[1] Studies by Francis Hsu, "The Myth of Chinese Family Size," American Journal of Sociology (1943), and C. K. Yang, The Chinese Family in the Communist Revolution (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1959) have revealed that the so-called traditional Confucian Chinese family was more of a myth than a fact.

[2] Minorities in American Society (New York: American Book Co., 1952).

Family separation characterized most of the Chinese families with members in the United States from the 1850s to the 1950s. Three factors brought about change. The first was the repeal of the exclusion acts against Chinese immigration in 1943, which also gave the Chinese the right to become naturalized citizens and to bring in their wives and children as non-quota immigrants. The second was the passage of the War Brides Act in 1946. The third was the Communist overthrow of the Nationalist government in 1949. But the small quota for China of 105 per year continued to act as an insuperable barrier to speedy reunification. The mutilated family was still much in evidence in the 1960s and continues to exist in the 1970s.

Prominent Female Role

I have lived in and visited villages in southern China in the 1930s and the 1970s where the inhabitants were overwhelmingly women, children and older folk. The able-bodied men were abroad, and their absence was conspicuous. The family income came in bi-monthly or quarterly checks from the United States. Women performed most of the tasks and made the family decisions. The children had never seen their fathers or had seen them only on their infrequent trips back to China. Even husbands and wives, separated by thousands of miles and lengthy intervals between trips, were strangers to one another. Parental bonds were stronger, held together by blood ties and the cardinal virtue of filial piety. Female influence in child-rearing was dominant. The children were surrounded by their mothers, aunts, grandmothers, and perhaps, grandfathers returned from abroad. Parallels can be drawn between these families and those of the New England fishermen who used to be away at sea for long periods of time or military families in time of war. There were few male models to

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3. Betty Lee Sung, The Story of the Chinese in America (New York: Collier Books, 1971) p. 320.

emulate; Freud would be hard put to explain his Oedipus complex in this kind of family situation where no father is around to compete with the son for the mother's attention.

The physical absence of the men created a departure from the prevailing patriarchial familial structure. Even if the immigrant family could not be labeled a matriarchial one, it was definitely female dominant. The women from such families enjoyed a modicum of independence and authority that their sisters in traditional families did not have. They had to make the daily decisions affecting the life of the family and they learned how to handle money and deal with people outside of the home. Naturally, these women would be extremely self-reliant. Their lives were centered totally around their children and their parents-in-law. The husband-wife relationship was a minor aspect of the marriage to be played out occasionally during the husband's return trips to China.

Family Size and Spacing of Children

The mutilated family structure has spawned other peculiar characteristics in the immigrant Chinese family. One is family size. The number of children depended upon the frequency of the husband's trips home, and if these were infrequent, the number of offspring were correspondingly few. Traditionally, the Chinese have valued large families and many sons. Forced to live apart by the circumstance of United States immigration barriers and thus unable to have more children, immigrant families were invariably smaller. Not only were the children fewer, their births were more widely spaced. The years separating the siblings again inevitably depended upon the frequency of the father's return trips. Consequently, in many immigrant Chinese families the age gap between siblings is greater than usual. In fact, the parents may have sets of children widely spaced. The more common situation is an older set born in China when the father made his periodic trips home and another set born in the United States after the family was brought to this country. Though the siblings may be brothers and sisters born of the same parents, the age gap between them may be so great that they have little in common with one another.

Age Gap between Husband and Wife

One aspect of Chinese-American family life that I have observed and suspect but have not verified with research is the tendency of many husbands to be much older than their wives. It was more commonly noted after World War II and perhaps less commonly found today. The situation was created by the war years from 1937 to 1946. China and the Pacific area were war zones, so men not married before they came to this country had their marriages delayed until the cessation of hostilities. When peace came in 1946, the men rushed home to get brides, and the emigration figures will prove this.[4] The prospective grooms, long past the marriage

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4. Ibid., p. 85.

age, inevitably chose brides just ready for marriage. I have seen frequent instances of this in my family visits, but I will have to substantiate my assertion with more factual data. In the meantime, this can be a fertile area of research for other social scientists.

Relay Immigration

If the men came first and the wives and children joined them subsequently, one may characterize this phenomena as immigration in relays. This pattern of immigration is fairly common among other immigrant groups as well as the Chinese and is somewhat culturally or politically determined; many families, of course, do immigrate together as a group. The situation gives rise to a set of adjustment problems in addition to the one of transplantation because the immediate family members must get to know one another when reunited. One girl said, "At first, I could not bring myself to call this strange man 'Father.' The words stuck to my tongue." Sons who had been indulged by their mothers looked upon their fathers as intruders into their close family circle. Wives had to relinquish their control over the purse strings and their authority as heads of the household. The men had to get to know their women and children, some of whom they had never seen before. In spite of these tremendous stresses and strains, the family shell has withstood the battering, but there have been major alterations within the family.

Status and Role

In the traditional Chinese family, every man, woman, and child has a definite place within a culturally prescribed hierarchy. If everyone knows his or her place and acts accordingly, order is assured. In addition to status or position, people have roles to play and these roles delineate the way they relate to one another and to society at large. If a society is stable, the role changes are minor. If a society is in a state of flux, the roles may have to be altered drastically to fit the circumstances.[5] For the uprooted Chinese immigrant family, the status and role configurations have been drastically altered in the following ways:

- Lower occupational status of the father

- Raised status of working wife/mother

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[5] Georgene Seward and Robert C. Williamson, eds., Sex Roles in Changing Society (New York: Random House, 1970) pp. 371-373.

- Reversal of roles between parents and children
- Parental absence and obsolescence
- Wide generation gap
- Increased status of female offspring
- Loss of wider kinship or clan support

Father's Lower Status. If the father has been the source of the checks that were sent regularly back to Hong Kong or China, he indubitably enjoyed the elevated status due him as the family provider. He also enjoyed a high social status as a "guest of the Golden Mountains."[6]

As has already been established, the more recent immigrants tend to be among the professional class, but when they come to these shores, they find that they must take lower echelon jobs. The language barrier is the biggest hurdle they face--a lawyer, an accountant, a teacher, or businessman in Hong Kong cannot simply pick up his former profession or business here. At the beginning, he must accept what work there is, and if he is dependent upon his relatives or friends to help him find a job that job is inevitably in the restaurant business. See Table 10-1 showing occupations of parents before and after immigration. Note in column 3 that only one out of ten fathers who had held professional positions prior to immigration could find a similar one after immigration. Half the businessmen and five-sixths of the skilled laborers had to take lower-rung jobs, and it is obvious that these jobs (108) are concentrated in restaurant work. A very high proportion--75 out of 262--did not respond to this question fully, indicating perhaps that they were unemployed or were reluctant to state what their jobs were. Such a come-down is not only disappointing for the man himself, but it also reduces his status in the eyes of his wife and children. One father used to own a fleet of taxis in Hong Kong. Now he runs a laundromat. On many occasions, he has regretted his decision to come here, but he consoles himself by saying that his children will have a better future in the United States. Another father with whom we spoke used to be a pharmacist; he was unemployed. He considered himself a professional and was loath to accept a lower status job. A man's work is his identity. To step downward or backward must be a terrible blow to his ego and self-esteem.

Working Wives and Mothers. The wives are not saddled as much with such ego problems. Most have never gone outside the home to earn money before. Table 10-1 shows that 157, or approximately 60 percent, were

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6. Few people in China or Hong Kong concern themselves with how the Chinese earn their money in this country. All they know is that the sum, when magnified by the favorable exchange rate, is generous, so that they view this country as the Mountain of Gold, and that is the colloquial expression they used for the United States.

TABLE 10-1

PARENTS' OCCUPATIONS BEFORE AND AFTER IMMIGRATION BY RESIDENCE

	In Chinatown				In Satellite Community				Total			
	Father		Mother		Father		Mother		Father		Mother	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Professional	5	0	1	2	5	1	1	0	10	1	2	2
Businessman	14	3	1	0	20	14	2	3	34	17	3	3
Skilled laborer	24	5	1	0	6	1	1	0	30	6	2	0
Clerical worker	4	0	2	0	7	0	1	0	11	0	3	0
Factory worker	29	28	36	105	8	4	7	35	37	32	43	140
Restaurant worker	18	77	4	1	11	31	1	1	29	108	5	2
Farmer	2	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	3	0	2	0
Seaman	18	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	22	1	0	0
Service worker	16	10	*	*	9	12	*	*	25	22	*	*
Housewife	*	*	91	34	*	*	66	30	*	*	157	64
No response	33	39	26	21	28	36	19	30	61	75	45	51
Total	163	163	163	163	99	99	99	99	262	262	262	262

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

* Not applicable

housewives before immigration, whereas almost all who could be identified as employed worked in the garment factories after their arrival here. Garment factory work is readily available, requires no language ability, is quickly learned, flexible in hours, and close at hand.

Because it is harder for a man than for a woman to find suitable employment, or because a man may find it beneath his dignity to accept a lower status job, while financial needs are pressing the woman of the house goes to work. In many cases, she becomes the main family provider until the husband resigns himself to the fact that restaurant work is about the best that he can hope for. Garment factory work may net more than restaurant work considering the long hours that the newcomer puts in at her sewing machine. She is paid by the piece and, depending upon her speed and the time she puts in, she can gross upward of $200 a week during the busy season. This is a fantastic sum to a woman who has never earned money before, and it gives her a sense of increased status and power.

This reversal of husband and wife roles has its repercussions within the family circle. It puts an immediate strain on the conjugal relationship at a time when the husband's self-esteem is low and when the entire family is trying to make adjustment to all of the other changes happening so swiftly in their lives.

Families without Parents. If the wife/mother puts in eight to twelve hours a day at work, she will not be able also to provide services she formerly performed for her husband and children. Nor will she be there to keep an eye on the children. The most noticeable phenomenon in the Chinese immigrant family is the lack of parental presence. We have already mentioned instances of this. In Table 10-2, we tabulated the number of hours or days that the Chinese high school immigrant students see their parents. For example, 82 percent lived with both mother and father, but 32 percent did not see their fathers from one day to the next and 21 percent never even caught a glimpse of their mothers. If the father worked in a restaurant, his hours are usually 10:00 A.M. until 11:00 or midnight. On his one day off, he would sleep late and perhaps manage to see his children for a few hours that day after school, most likely at the evening meal.

The mothers worked equally long hours; that they saw their children more often than their husbands did was due to the fact that they frequently took their children to the factory with them or at least would come home to prepare the evening meal. It was disturbing to note that 17 percent of the high school students never saw their mothers--not even for a single day--from one week to the next. This conspicuous absence of parents from the immigrant Chinese home made it extremely difficult for us to talk to the parents. We could not interview the families during the day, but even when we tried to make evening or weekend appointments, we frequently had to go back many times because the mothers would suddenly be working overtime or be called in on Sundays to get out an order.

TABLE 10-2

CONTACT WITH AND CLOSENESS TO PARENTS OF CHINESE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

	Father N=270		Mother N=270	
	No.	%	No.	%
Live with parents:				
Yes	222	82	232	86
No	27	10	21	8
No response	21	8	17	6
Hours see parents daily:				
0	86	32	57	21
1-2	40	15	10	4
3-5	96	36	87	32
6-8+	48	18	116	43
Days see parents weekly:				
0	58	21	45	17
1	40	15	10	4
2-5	31	11	19	7
6-7	141	52	196	73
Closeness to parents:				
Distant	17	6	5	2
Not close	46	17	25	9
Somewhat close	78	29	78	29
Very close	106	39	147	54
No response	23	9	15	6

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

When some children were asked how they felt about their parents not being home, they said they felt lonely, ignored, and neglected. The mother's absence was most keenly felt, and many made the comment that they felt that their mothers loved money more than they loved their children. They understood the need for their mothers to work, but they were critical of the long hours that their mothers were away from home. When asked if the parents kept close supervision over them, 53 percent of the male high school students and 66 percent of the females said yes. The remainder said no. So in spite of parental absence from the home, the supervision was felt by the boys half of the time and by the girls two-thirds of the time. When asked who disciplines them, the following picture emerged:

TABLE 10-3

DISCIPLINARIAN IN THE FAMILY

	Males		Females	
	No.	%	No.	%
No one	24	29	14	16
Father	15	18	12	14
Mother	37	45	53	60
Other	7	8	9	10
Total	83	100	88	100

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

Obviously, the mother is the main disciplinarian in the home, but it is disturbing to note that 29 percent of the teenage males are disciplined by no one. This lack of parental supervision, guidance, or presence may not have an immediate impact, but I fear that the seeds sown will sprout in later years. Already, we may be seeing the results of it in the eruption of the Chinatown gangs.

There were, however, some positive conditions and strengths within these families that should be noted. In spite of the fact that many of these children hardly knew or saw their fathers, they still felt somewhat close or very close to their fathers. They felt even closer to their mothers (see Table 10-2). These feelings are a strong holdover from the cultural values instilled in them to honor and respect their parents. When asked: "How often do you agree or disagree with your parents?" the girls were found to be more compliant, but neither sexes was at great odds with father or mother. In this instance, we are referring to immigrant children and not American-born children of immigrant parents where the generation gap is considerable.[7]

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[7] Substantiation of this fact comes from the author's dealings with young people in her nine years of teaching at the City College of New York and in her contacts with Chinese organizations and families.

TABLE 10-4

AGREEMENT OR DISAGREEMENT WITH PARENTS

Agree with Parents	Males		Females	
Never	19	15%	7	5%
Sometimes	40	33	44	34
Half time	41	33	43	34
Always	23	19	34	27
Total	123	100	128	100

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

TABLE 10-5

FIVE RANKING AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT WITH PARENTS

Males	Females
1. Spending money	1. Disobedience
2. Disobedience	2. Spending money
3. Parents too old-fashioned	3. Dating
4. Chores	4. Coming home late
5. Coming home late	5. Parents expect too much

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

In our interviews and talks with the high school students, even when they had strong disagreements with their parents or when they were somewhat ashamed of how their parents looked or behaved, after having voiced their displeasure they would invariable end up saying, "But he's my father," or "She's my mother." Those two sentences settled the matter. Parental bonds were ironclad. Children were reluctant to go against their parents wishes or to incur their displeasure.

Reversal of Parent-Child Roles. Our study was confined to recent immigrant children and youth, so that the Chinese cultural values and roles still persist in the home. However, as the children are exposed more and more to the American way of life, parental ties, control, and influence begin to fade. A reversal in parent-child roles is a frequent occurrence in Chinese-American homes, especially those where the parents are not well educated and do not speak English. Right after immigration, parents and children are in the same place--the starting line. Neither speaks English, but within a few years the children will have attended school and become fairly proficient in English. At that point, the parents will turn increasingly to their children for help. Instead of the parents leading the way and instructing the child, the roles are reversed. Some parents are quite helpless--especially the ones who have had little education, and they lean heavily upon the children. At the same time because of cultural conflicts as the American ways seep into the immigrant families or because the parents are not knowledgeable, the children cannot turn to their parents for guidance or direction. This point was brought out previously in the chapter on peer groups. When the youths had problems, they turned increasingly to their peers, and the fathers were the last ones to be consulted.

The educational level of the parents from our high school student survey is given in Table 10-6 and is correlated with occupation. At least half of the fathers had a high school education or better, but only 32 out of 253 had been to college. The other half had either an elementary school education or none at all. Overwhelmingly, the mothers in our survey group were poorly educated. Yet almost all of the students surveyed aspired to college. The disparity of educational levels between immigrant parents and children can be great and creates a situation in which the parent as model no longer holds. In this function they are obsolete. The children need substitute models either in their teachers or from leaders in the Chinese community. Unfortunately, role models or leadership in the Chinese communities are sorely lacking.

Elevated Female Status

Unquestionably, female status in the Chinese immigrant family has been altered by the present and important economic role of the mother, by her former independent role as head of the household in the homeland, and by her place in the hearts of her children. She commands an important position in the home. But it is the second-generation female status that jumps immeasurably higher. The key is education. Girls have the same opportunity as boys to go through high school. They still do not enjoy the advantages given their brothers as evidenced by the fact that the ratio of Chinese male graduates to female graduates at City College of New York in 1976 was 3:1,[8] but their high school education will provide them with a ladder to greater freedom of choice and latitude than their mothers had. When asked which is more important, career or marriage, two-thirds of the girls surveyed answered career.[9]

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[8] Survey of CCNY 1976 Chinese graduates by the author.

[9] Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978.

TABLE 10-6

PARENTS' PRESENT OCCUPATION AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION

	Level of Education				
	None	Elem.	H.S.	College+	Total
Father's Present Occupation					
Professional	0	0	0	1	1
Businessman	1	1	5	10	17
Skilled laborer	3	2	1	0	6
Factory worker	3	12	15	3	33
Restaurant worker	14	48	44	3	109
Seaman	0	0	1	0	1
Service or unskilled worker	3	8	8	3	22
No response	5	21	26	12	64
Total	29	92	100	32	253
Mother's Present Occupation					
Professional	0	0	0	0	0
Business woman	0	0	2	1	3
Skilled laborer	0	0	0	0	0
Clerical worker	0	0	0	0	0
Factory Worker	34	66	40	1	141
Restaurant worker	0	1	1	0	2
Housewife or Service worker	13	24	22	3	62
No response	7	20	10	3	40
Total	54	111	75	8	248

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

Loss of Wider Kinship or Clan Support

The average Chinese family may not be the extended kinship unit described by Olga Lang or Lin Yutang,[10] but stem, or nuclear, families generally live close enough to one another in China, Hong Kong, or Taiwan to see one another frequently, to be able to call upon each other in times of need, or to derive that sense of security inherent in kinship relationships. When a Chinese family migrates to the United States, it seeks the proximity of kinfolk by crowding into Chinatowns. Family ties still hold, but many of the props have been pulled out by economic conditions and American values.

One complaint heard frequently is that people have no time for one another anymore. For economic survival, everyone works long hours at jobs. Restaurants are open seven days a week, and their evening and weekend hours take away the time that parents ordinarily spend at home with their families. The piece-rate arrangement in the garment factories pits the women against the clock in their race for the dollar. The one day that they have off is spent catching up with essential household and personal chores. Time is a luxury; no one can afford to stop and chat, to exchange pleasantries, to listen to another's concerns and problems, or even to be sociable. Life is a treadmill, and each person is fully involved in and intent upon staying on the belt. Many of the little niceties of human relations are sacrificed to the time demon.

One lady mentioned that her sister-in-law and former bosom friend and confidante in Hong Kong was very abrupt and cool toward her when she went for a visit shortly after arriving in New York. The brother-in-law had a business that took him on the road a great deal, and his wife traveled with him to keep him company and help him out. They had been packing for the trip. After the newcomer's first visit, she did not hear from her sister-in-law for four months. She took this lack of contact to mean that her sister-in-law no longer liked her or wished to associate with her. She reminisced at length about how they had slept in the same bed together, ate together, shopped together, and did everything as one when their husbands were away in the United States. Now, she lamented bitterly, her sister-in-law doesn't even know her. She doesn't even give her a telephone call.

The real situation, of course, was that the sister-in-law was traveling with her husband, and long distance calls are expensive. When she came back East and invited her sister-in-law to come visit, the latter was already emotionally bruised and their relationship was strained.

"People change a lot when they come to this country," is a statement commonly heard. "They become selfish. Whatever the cause, kinfolk are not as willing to lend a helping hand as they were in the homeland. Each one is so overwhelmed by his own problems, you cannot blame him."

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[10] Olga Lang, Chinese Family and Society (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946) and Lin Yutang, My Country and My People (New York: John Day, 1935).

The family or village associations, once the rallying points of common ancestry and identity, are fast losing ground as viable institutions. Controlled by elders who cannot and have not kept up with conditions created by the recent and huge influx of immigrants, these organizations are declining and disintegrating. The younger people no longer belong or participate. In fact, they don't even have time for their immediate family, much less for their extended family.

The Family Abode

The physical environs of the family are no less important a factor than the makeup or status roles of the members. A description of the two communities from which we drew our subjects and respondents was already detailed in Chapter II. Let us now relate what we learned when we visited the homes of some of the students we interviewed.

Case One. Wendy Chin is thirteen years old and attends the Chinatown junior high. She has been in the United States one year. Her father came first; her mother came with the son two years ago; Wendy and her sister came last. They were originally from the mainland, but had lived in Hong Kong for ten years while waiting for their papers. The family lives in a fifth floor walk-up apartment of the fringes of Chinatown bordering on the old Jewish community. They pay a little over $100 a month for a four-room apartment, but they had to pay $800 key money for the privilege of moving in. There are two small bedrooms, one large kitchen, and one elongated entranceway used as the living room. There is a modern toilet, but no bathtub or shower. Obviously, the apartment has been fixed up recently, but there are two large leaks in the ceilings of the kitchen and living room and water has loosened large chunks of plaster. The apartment is one of ten in the building owned by a Chinese landlord.

The apartment was very clean inside, but the hallway was dark and the stairs rickety. Yet Mrs. Chin was very happy that her son had found this place, and one could see that the family members were very close and overjoyed that they were now all united in this country. Mrs. Chin worked in a garment factory hanging up skirts and buttoning up garments. She can earn about twenty dollars a day. I did not see Mr. Chin. I was told he goes off to work in the suburbs at 10:00 or 11:00 A.M. and returns after midnight.

Case Two. Su Ling, age thirteen, also from the Chinatown junior high, kept putting me off about visiting her home. In most of the family visits, we had to resort to the door-to-door salesman's technique of putting our foot in the door and trying to talk our way in. Most of the students refused to tell us where they lived. It seemed as if they were ashamed of their homes, and I could see why Su Ling felt that way. I saw Su Ling walking home from school, so I followed her. When she got to the door, I walked up and asked her to invite me in. She consented reluctantly, but

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told me I could only stay for a short while.

There are two bedrooms in the three-room apartment and a tiny hallway space. The living room is about eight feet square. The parents use one bedroom and six children (boys and girls alike) sleep in three bunkbeds in the other. The bunkbeds line the walls of the room like an inverted U, and if all six children were to jump out of bed at the same time, they would not have space to stand up. The room has only one light fixture on the ceiling, so the beds are utilized only to sleep in. A seventh person sleeps on the living room couch. There is a television, and the tiny hallway holds a sewing machine for the mother to work with at home.

Su Ling said her mother would be very angry at her if she knew that Su Ling had let someone into the house, so I did not linger long.

Case Three. Yuet Han, a young fellow of fourteen, is also from the Chinatown junior high and has been in this country for about six months. His family operates a fish store in the heart of Chinatown, so I dropped in on him one day after school. He was helping out by waiting on customers, and business was brisk. Yuet Han pointed to a woman and said, "That's my mother," but I could not talk to her while she was going back and forth waiting on customers and cleaning the fish. I asked where the family lived. Yuet Han pointed to the back of the store. Propriety prevented me from intruding further into their private lives when the family was so busy at work. Again, I did not see any male figure around who could be the father.

Case Four. The first time my research associate, Dr. Rose Chao, went on a family visit, she was so upset she called me immediately afterward to say that she wasn't going to make another visit unless someone went with her. The shock of what she saw was very vividly described in her preliminary report.

> The winter of 1977 was one of the coldest in New York's history. That winter, the Chus, a family of six, slept in their tiny kitchen, about 8' by 10' in their three-room sixth-floor walk-up. In the kitchen there was a television, four chairs, a kitchen table, and two refrigerators. One was broken and served as a storage cabinet since there was none in the kitchen. A tiny gas stove stood inches from the door with an old sink next to it. There was an electric heater in the center of the room. I was alarmed to find only one electric outlet in the kitchen. It was heavily overloaded with plugs. Since the Chus' apartment was on the top floor, the unmelted snow, accumulated during the two previous snowfalls, had made the ceiling in the apartment very damp. In a corner of the kitchen ceiling near the pipes there was a steady drip.
>
> The front room in the apartment overlooking the street had not been used the entire winter; the temperature in that room only differed a few degrees from the temperature outside. There was no heater in this room. Mrs. Chu kept the window next to the fire escape opened a crack because of the fear of fire. There

had been a fire in a building a few blocks away several months ago. Mrs. Chu wanted to be able to open the window so that the family could get out quickly in case of fire. Fear of burning to death was greater than the discomfort of the bitter cold.

Dr. Chao went on to tell how a rat ran across her feet as she was sitting in the apartment. She shuddered to think of the health hazard and physical hazard that these rodents could pose, in particular to the little baby.

More cases of the family living quarters in Chinatown would only be a repeat of the same. The housing stock in Chinatown is ancient and dilapidated. The adjacent area into which the new immigrant families are moving is the infamous Lower East Side. The rents are kept low by rent control, but made expensive by key money. The demand is so great that shortage of housing is acute. It is the overcrowding that stands out as the most glaring problem. Perhaps the crowding is not so keenly felt by the immigrants who have just come out of a sardine can like Hong Kong. Nevertheless, the lack of space and privacy must take its toll on health and nerves.

Housing facilities in the satellite community were ten times better than those in Chinatown. As was mentioned previously, the houses now occupied by the Chinese families were built during the 1950s and 1960s. They are solid two- to three-family brick attached homes with front and backyards. Some are older frame houses, but they have been well maintained by their owners. The newer houses, rows and rows of them, are almost all the same. There are two six-room apartments on the upper floors, a garage and a three-room unit on the street level. These homes sold in the late 1970s for $90,000 and up. Those renting the six-room units paid from $350 to $385 per month. In comparison with apartments in New York City of the same quality, the rental could be considered reasonable. In general, the furnishings in the homes were modest and more functional than decorative. Invariable, there would be bicycles in the hallway. Books and toys, which were noticeably lacking in the Chinatown homes, were more frequently in evidence in the satellite community homes.

Obviously the higher rentals or cost of purchasing a home meant that the immigrants who went into the satellite Chinatown had more financial resources available to them or else they were willing to spend more of their family income on housing than were New York City Chinatown families.

Case Five. The family arrived two and a half years ago, but the father had been here previously. (Again, we see the relay immigration pattern.) The father has a graduate degree in business administration, but he now owns and operates the local grocery store. The wife had been a nurse in Taiwan. The two boys, age nineteen and sixteen,were in high school. The family is Mandarin-speaking.

It was obvious that there was a great deal of discontent in the family. The mother wanted to resume her nursing, but knew it was an unattainable dream because she could not speak English. Besides, she had to help her husband in the store. The teenage sons wanted to play ball with their friends after school, but they had to help their parents. They resented having to work. The father felt that his sons were lazy and his wife was not giving him the moral support he needed. He complained that all these years he had lived alone in this country. Finally, he managed to bring his wife and sons here, but their expectation of the United States was much greater than could be met, and instead of being grateful, they were disappointed. He felt that with his M.B.A., he could have done better.

Case Six. Mr. Wang owned an efficiency apartment complex of twenty-five apartments in Taiwan, which he rented out to United States military personnel. In Mr. Wang's case, the relay immigration pattern was reversed. He sent his wife and children to this country first. He came a year later. He was very excited at the prospect of coming to the United States, but once here the only job he could get was as a salad chef in a large midtown Manhattan hotel. He did not sell his apartment complex in Taiwan, so he is still collecting rent there to subsidize his living expenses here.

Fewer mothers in the satellite community worked, so that they had more time to spend with their children and among themselves. Dr. Chao reported that she was often welcomed in her home visits because the mothers hoped that she would make a fourth in their mah-jong games.

Considering the differences in the family background between the immigrants who lived in the two communities, it is very difficult for us to make valid comparisons about adjustment and adaptation. It seemed as if the recent immigrant families living in the satellite communities went directly into that neighborhood without being first routed through Chinatown. They tended to have more financial resources, to be better educated, and to speak Mandarin instead of Cantonese. Therefore, we are talking about two different classes of immigrants: those who are well off enough to be able to afford the $350 rentals or the purchase of a $90,000 home, and those who must squeeze into the rundown tenements of Chinatown. If there is any truth to the commonly maintained premise that socioeconomic class is an almost infallible indicator of success or failure in the American educational system,[11] then the immigrant children living in the satellite Chinese community will have an inherent advantage in their achievement record in school and in their adaptation to a new life in the United States. We may not be able to make a valid comparison of the extent and rate of adjustment of immigrant children in the two communities for this reason, but at least we will have uncovered this difference and taken this factor into account accordingly.

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[11] Professor W.W. Charters maintains that social class of the parents predicts with almost certainty the success or failure of the offspring in the American education system. He said that this has been so consistently confirmed by research that it now can be regarded as empirical law. See W.W. Charters, "The Social Background of Teaching," in N.L. Gage, ed., Handbook of Research on Teaching (Skokie, Ill.: Rand McNally & Co., 1963) pp. 739-740.

Findings

1. The Chinese immigrant family resembles neither the family in China nor the American family because of the social, economic, and legal forces operating upon it.

2. It has had a long history of dismemberment--the father in this country and the mother and children in China, Hong Kong, or Taiwan.

3. Reunification of the families generally took place in relays.

4. Because of the separation, children were fewer and more widely spaced.

5. Because of the absence of the fathers, mothers in the immigrant families played a more prominent role. Upon arrival in this country they may, in fact, be the major rice-winner, especially when the men have had to take on lower status jobs.

6. The long working hours of the parents have deprived the Chinese immigrant children of parental presence.

7. In many homes, the parents have come to rely upon the children for communication with the outside world and for interpreting the American ways, thus reversing traditional parent-child roles.

8. Most of the family dwellings in New York's Chinatown are in deplorable condition and merit priority consideration as hazards not only to physical health, but to mental health as well.

CHAPTER XI: ADJUSTMENT

The ultimate answer sought after in this research is: How are they doing? How are these immigrant children and youth of Chinese origin making out in their new homeland? Are they weathering the uprooted process?

Social Adjustment

The determination of whether one is doing well or not depends upon the yardstick applied. Throughout this report, we have dwelled heavily upon the sociological aspects of adjustment. We observed and studied the children and youth in their schools, their homes, their communities, and among their peers. These are group environments. The child is related to the group to see if he fits within the societal norms and expectations. Do his performance and behavior interfere with those around him? If there is no perceivable dislocation or disorganization caused by these children in the school, home, and community, then all is well. If disruptions or eruptions have occurred, the deviant behavior must be brought back into line with the collective interests of the group in question.

Teacher and Parent Expectations

For example, what is expected in an American setting of children who are immigrants from another culture? The expectation--and even the law mandates it--is that children under sixteen must attend school. If the child shows up in school every day, does his lessons reasonably well as judged by test scores, commits no infractions of the rules and regulations, and causes no trouble, then he is deemed a well-adjusted child. In Chapter IV, we described the Chinese children in a school setting. In spite of the language difficulties experienced, in spite of the strange customs and surroundings into which they are thrusted, the overwhelming majority seem to be doing well academically. Their attendance exceeded ninety percent. The teachers are absolutely delighted with their Chinese pupils, for they are obedient and respectful, they make little commotion and even less trouble, they do as they are told, and they make the teacher's life very easy.

Of course, this type of behavior is already part of the Chinese children's upbringing and has merely been transplanted from the Chinese school to the American school. For American teachers who are accustomed to less pliant students, the change offers a welcome respite, although many teachers said they wished for a less rigid teacher/pupil relationship. In the eyes of teacher and student alike, by and large, Chinese immigrant children are performing very well in school and may in fact exceed expectation.

Children are expected to obey their parents, to please their parents by doing well in school, to help with family chores, and, if necessary, to help toward family financial support. In these respects Chinese immigrant children again experience no discontinuity with the ways in which they have been brought up, with exception perhaps, of working. As we showed in Chapter X, in spite of frequent parental absence in the immigrant family, the children identify strongly with their parents and with their families. This identification and attachment may weaken as the immigrant child begins to absorb American values and the American way of thinking, but shortly after immigration, the maintenance of that sense of family loyalty, duty, and obligation marks them as dutiful, well-behaved children. As roles are reversed, however, as the child begins to guide and support the parent, the gap between parent and child will widen and create problems in the future.

Dropout and Truancy

If the dropout index is used to measure adjustment, we can come again to a favorable conclusion. In Table 4-5 we saw that the dropout rate among the bilingual high school students was extremely low. Not only do the youth continue with their education beyond the compulsory age of sixteen, but the high schools continue to enroll students twenty and twenty-one years of age. Moreover, and almost without exception, the high school graduates indicated that they would go on to college.

Truancy and cutting are usually the first symptoms of adjustment problems. If the cause of the truancy can be uncovered, as is being attempted in the Chinatown high school by a very conscientious guidance counselor, problems can be brought to the surface and dealt with before they become more serious. For example, this guidance counselor would call the family after the third day of absence from school. Many times the parents do not know the child is absent, and alerting them to this fact usually means the parents will deal with the situation immediately. Once a dialogue is established between the guidance counselor and the parents, both will try to help the child. Two cases come to mind to illustrate this point, but such cases were not common.

Case One. Male student, seventeen years old, in the eleventh grade, started to cut physical education classes. He would leave by the eighth period. The persistent cutting signaled a problem. The guidance counselor called the boy's father, who did not even know that his son was attending that particular high school, which goes to show that the parents are often unaware of their children's activities. After a few sessions with the counselor, the boy revealed that he was leaving school by the eighth period to avoid the gangs who were threatening him after school. By sneaking out early, he thought he was solving the problem. Further questioning uncovered the fact that he was not eating during his lunch period either. Instead, he went to the library, where he thought he was safe. The boy's grades were suffering from the tension engendered by this fear, but he was attempting to handle the situation by himself instead of letting his family and the school counselor help him. This tendency to keep problems to themselves, to evade the situation or to withdraw from dealing with the problem directly is fairly common among immigrant children. Unless an astute observer recognizes the telltale signs, the problem may go undiscovered until it is too late.

Case Two. Young girl, seventeen years old, in the United States nine months, had been absent from school for three days. The counselor looked up the girl's academic record and found that she had been doing quite well in spite of her short period of time in the country. When contacted, the father said his daughter had decided to quit school and go to work. The counselor did not accept this explanation. She asked the girl to come back to school for a chat. The girl came in dressed completely in black. She was pale and haggard. No one in the family had died, but symbolically she was mourning her mother, who had gone back to Hong Kong with her youngest brother. In their grief and longing for their mother, she and her three siblings had quit school and gone to work in the garment factory with a single purpose in mind. They would work until they had saved enough money for plane fare. Then they would be reunited with their beloved mother.

In this family, the common pattern of relay immigration was again evident. The father had come first and, after many years separation, he had sent for his family. The mother, however, did not like the United States. It was not clear why the mother picked up and left with the youngest boy. The children, who were very close to their mother, blamed their father for "chasing her away." To punish him, they dressed in black mourning clothes.

In her talks with the guidance counselor, the girl confessed that she wanted to finish school very badly and go on to college. When made to see that the chances of her ever completing her education in Hong Kong were very slim for herself as well as for her brothers and sisters, she began to view the prospect of leaving the United States in a different light. The girl was referred to a psychological counselor from Columbia University doing fieldwork at the school, who helped her to see the situation from her father's viewpoint as well as from her own. With the broadened perspective, she resumed her studies and her resentment against her father subsided.

Again, we see an example of trying to shove the dirt under the rug by refusing to admit to a problem in order to come to grips with it. Here, it was the father who said his daughter wanted to quit school and work. If the guidance counselor had not persisted, this case would have smoldered later to erupt when the children departed. A similar situation occurred in Bip's case, detailed in Chapter VIII, when the father refused to ask for help from the community agencies because he was afraid of losing face. When claims are made that all is well, further probing may reveal that all is not indeed well. It takes an astute observer atuned to the cultural nuances of denial to find whether there really are problems. That is why the guidance counselor may be an indispensable person for Chinese immigrant students. A competent counselor who can speak their tongue and who is familiar with their cultural leanings can immediately spot a budding problem and deal with it before it gets out of hand, especially since the Chinese try to cover up their difficulties and stoically endure rather than attempt to deal with their problems. As evidenced in the cases described, the counselor in the Chinatown high school's bilingual program defused many psychological bombs before they exploded.

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Being Part of a Gang

The most glaring outward manifestation of maladaptive social behavior among immigrant youths is the rapid increase in gangs and their vicious activities. As was noted in Chapter VII, gang membership is made up almost exclusively of immigrants. My own thoughts about the matter are that behind New York's Chinese gang activity is not so much rebellion against society as the inducement of big money and the need to belong to a group for protection. The fact that gang members must threaten and coerce others to join their ranks indicates that being a member is not always a voluntary act. They join out of fear, and fear blocks their exit from the gang. Sometimes a gang member may swagger about and act high and mighty, but when asked whether he would like his younger brother to join, he will react with the surprising answer, "I'll beat the hell out of him if he even gets near a gang."

Money is the drawing card. Hundreds and sometimes thousands of dollars are dangled before the naive teenager who, as a recent immigrant, may have had all his props pulled out from under him: He can't speak English. He can't catch up with his school work. The future job prospects look bleak. He has to work long hard hours. The family quarters are cramped, and his parents are away most of the time. His close friends are thousands of miles away, and he hasn't formed close relationships with new friends. He is beaten up and threatened on one hand and enticed by promises of power, money, and status on the other. Money may be the main thing that spells security to him, and he grasps at it hungrily.

The excitement and glamor of belonging to the Chinese gangs are--thank heaven--short lived. A social worker who works with gang members says the age span for most is fourteen to eighteen and the membership turnover is high. Sometimes there is wholesale depletion of the ranks, which explains why recruitment efforts are vigorous and vicious. Within a short time, peripheral members try to ease out of the gang. They may be sent out of town by their parents, the family may move out of Chinatown, or they may seek help from youth agencies. Those who stay in beyond their twenties generally are hard-core members, but even they become sick and tired of the kind of life they lead.

In an interview with the editor of Canal Magazine, even the notorious leader of the Ghost Shadows, Nicky Louie, admitted as much. He became a gang member at fifteen. By twenty-three, he was tired, empty, and spent. Ambushed twelve times and pretty close to death on a number of occasions, he still has some slugs rattling around in his lanky frame. When asked what he thought of youth gangs now, he replied without hesitation.

> I hope all the young people should think clearly before they act. Being superior is only a brief thrill. Nobody can be the champ forever. Yesterday I was the master of Mott Street. Today, it is somebody else. Who is to guarantee that he won't be pulled down from the stage? This kind of fighting has no ending to it, and it's meaningless. I, myself, am the perfect example of this. An exciting life cannot compensate for

> my emptiness. I gamble heavy, but it is only a way to paralyze my mental state. The few friends that were with me when I first started out, some died, some in jail. I even had to break up with my beloved. For these couple of years I actually gained nothing.[1]

He did gain money. From 1976 to 1977, he said the gang took in as much as $10,000 a week.[2] But even this kind of money loses its appeal in a short time for those who have a strong moral foundation grounded in the Chinese culture. Knowing these facts about Chinese gangs, we can take effective measures to stamp out the antisocial activities that they are engaged in. More effort must be made to provide fellowship for the young teenagers in a wholesome, constructive atmosphere, and more effort must be made to deal with the insecurities of the young immigrant during the adjustment stage. When the enticement of big money is curtailed, then these other remedies stand a chance of competing successfully against the gangs.

Gang-related activities and gambling are the two prominent offenses reported in the Chinatown precinct, although burglaries and even robberies seem to be on the rise. As I was writing this paragraph, the China Daily News came in the mail, and the lead story on local news reported three burglaries.[3] This seems to signal a new area of crime. A characteristic of crimes, violence, or offenses committed by the Chinese is that the victims are generally other Chinese.[4] In this respect, the antisocial behavior of Chinese gangs is different from that of other minorities who take out their frustrations on the out-group rather than on their own kind.

Female Deviants. In our methodology, we started out trying to find and match well-adjusted with maladjusted immigrant children, but we had to abandon that approach when we found that the teachers, guidance counselors, and principals had little but praise for the progress the children were making. Even more difficult than finding boys with problems was finding any irregular behavior with the girls. Female rebellion is generally manifested by running away from home or by promiscuity, but it was impossible to obtain data on either. The girls were very shy and reticient about talking at all. Unless the researcher has a great deal of time to spend with them and gain their confidence, the wall of silence is difficult to penetrate.

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[1] "Interview with Nicky Louie," Canal Magazine (New York: Better Chinatown Project, December 8, 1978) p. 1.

[2] Ibid.

[3] China Daily News (in Chinese) (New York, April 17, 1979) p. 12.

[4] Interview with police officers of the Fifth Precinct.

Sexual attractiveness is not something that the girls from Hong Kong or Taiwan flaunt. They are reserved and demure. From our observations of the girls in the lunchroom and on the playgrounds, they tended to stick together. Even dating is very limited (see Table 9-3). In conversation with some of the teachers, however, we learned that freer sexual behavior is more pronounced among Amerian-born Chinese, but these are outside the purview of our study. A few girls, however, do attach themselves to male gang members.

Psychological Adjustment

Stepping outside of societal bounds can be interpreted as social maladjustment, and it is readily recognized because it is disruptive and infringes upon the lives of other people. Psychological maladjustment is individual and personal, and to most people it is of less concern. If a child makes no demands, sits quietly, seldom opens his mouth, and withdraws when confronted with a problem, he may pass completely unnoticed and may even be praised for causing no trouble. To most parents and most teachers, this is the "good" child. Chinese culture tends to reinforce this kind of behavior. It places a high value on self-control, endurance, tolerance, "face", responsibility, and achievement via conforming.[5] Harmony is the keystone. Priority is placed upon the well-being of the group rather than on the individual, so that individual rights, concerns, and happiness are downplayed for the larger good of the family, the clan, the village, or the nation. The Chinese child is socialized to accept this priority as the proper order of things. He has a guilty conscience when he puts his own interests above that of the group, just like any child would feel if he obtained a piece of candy and went off in a corner to eat it by himself instead of sharing it with his brothers or sisters. He may want the candy all for himself, and he may enjoy it while he is eating it, but a twinge of remorse and guilt follows afterwards, especially if he is close to his brothers or sisters.

Standards of Behavior

Of course, the Western mind finds some of these ideas strange and peculiar. In American terms, normality is measured by different yardsticks. A child is well-adjusted if he:

- is on good terms with his parents, but not too close to be termed dependent.
- gets along with his peers.
- is outgoing and independent.

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[5] Kenneth A. Abbott, Harmony and Individualism (Taipei, Formosa: Orient Cultural Service, 1970) Chapter VIII.

- can handle problems in a rational manner.

- has an optimistic outlook on life.

- performs at a level comparable to that of his peers.

By Chinese standards, a "good" child is one who:

- is not necessarily emotionally close to his parents, but who will fulfill his familial obligations to them.

- respects and obeys authority.

- emulates adult behavior as soon as possible.

- is a conformist rather than a maverick.

- studies hard and values hard work.

- has a realistic outlook on life.

- will strive to outperform others.

Since there is such a wide divergence of standards of what is desirable and acceptable behavior and outlook, it would be folly for us to attempt to measure against the American norm the psychological well-being of a group of recent immigrant children brought up with different concepts of one's purpose in life. By and large, we relied upon observation and interviews to see if they were frightened, withdrawn, bewildered, sad, uncooperative, hostile, angry, or defiant.

The few cases of unconventional behavior we found have been reported in preceding chapters. In general, the children at the grade-school level experienced but a brief transitional period. Most of the teachers queried said that six months to a year was all that was needed for them to be able to get along comfortably. In fact, the concerns of the parents were that their children were losing their Chinese-speaking ability and their cultural heritage too rapidly. We found the children very spontaneous in classes and quite outgoing in the playgrounds. The one notable feature of their behavior was that they stuck to their own ethnic group and did not interact with members of other ethnic groups. If there was any interaction, it was abrasive rather than friendly. The Hispanic or black boys loved to tease the Chinese girls or playfully make them angry. The Chinese girls generally went around in a group or in pairs and would avoid the boys as much as possible.

As mentioned previously, the blacks, Hispanics, and Chinese all sat at their separate tables in the lunchroom and played among their own groups on the playground, with little intermingling. I noticed that the Chinese immigrant children regarded the other ethnic groups with a great deal of disdain. They felt that the others were too boisterous, too disruptive in the classroom, and too uninhibited in their personal relations. They felt very uncomfortable when they saw boys and girls kissing and hugging each other, and they would show their annoyance when other students were disruptive in class.

Since whites, other than Hispanics, were a minority in most of the schools that we researched, the Chinese immigrant students had less contact with other white students than with the Hispanics, who were usually the predominant group. This tends to insulate the Chinese from experiences that they would no doubt encounter later on in life--that of racial slurs, name-calling, prejudice and discrimination from whites. As long as the Chinese are the majority group or a sizable number in the schools, racism against them would not have affected them, at least not during the time of this study.

For many reasons, the high school students seemed to have greater difficulty than the younger ones in their adjustment. Of course, their lessons were more advanced, they were more deeply set in their ways and not as flexible as their younger compatriots. The language was harder for them to pick up, and so many of them had to work after school to contribute to the family purse as well as attend school.

If limited resources were available to help the immigrants in their transition, my recommendation would be to allocate it to upper school level programs for personalized tutoring, guidance and counseling, and perhaps programs for work-study. The immigrant youths already work and study, but a work-study program should introduce these young people to jobs outside the traditional occupations and outside of the community. This would serve to widen their horizons and bring them into contact with the larger American society.

Areas of Adjustment Difficulties

When asked to rank common areas of difficulty in their adjustment, students mentioned language as the problem most keenly felt by a very large margin (119) over the next category, which was worry over college or future (44) (see Table 11-1). Following fairly close behind were being picked on and gang threats. The students perceived these areas as their major concerns, but it is evident that these concerns are not long term but immediate ones. In order of priority, therefore, the high schools should provide more intensive language training, college counseling, and protective measures to safeguard the students from harassment and danger. For recent immigrant children, at least, having differences with parents is a minimal problem. The parent-child relationship is still emotionally close in spite of parental absence. Getting used to new foods and new customs are not troublesome problems. If their language barrier could be dealt with effectively, a major portion of their adjustment difficulties would be solved.

They Wanted to Come

One big plus in the reservoir of personal resources that enables the immigrant children and youth to deal positively with their transplantation

TABLE 11-1

ADJUSTMENT DIFFICULTIES OF CHINESE IMMIGRANT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Area of Difficulty	Rank Order - Difficulty in Adjustment				
	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Picked on	33	19	10	13	26
Not used to food	7	4	12	8	26
Different customs	9	18	17	15	27
Language barrier	119	32	15	10	30
School work	11	18	20	19	21
Gang threats	25	12	14	7	17
Differences with parents	3	8	14	11	20
Feelings of not belonging	15	15	20	18	23
Financial worries	12	32	30	23	17
Powerlessness	8	8	13	22	27
Worried college or future	44	35	38	33	39
Future not bright	12	12	16	20	35

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

NOTE: Totals sometimes exceed number of respondents because some students ranked several areas as equally difficult.

is the favorable attitude they have toward immigrating to the United States. To be able to come to this country may have been the culmination of years of effort on the part of the family and is a high-water mark of achievement. They wanted to come, and when asked if they wanted to go back few said yes, although some said they would like to go back for a visit. They may be critical of certain aspects of life in the United States, but they want to stay here. I remember addressing a group of about sixty recent immigrants in an employment training program. I invited them to tell me about their difficulties in adjusting to life here, and after the griping session I asked if any of them wanted to go back. Absolute silence fell over the audience. None wanted to backtrack. They were here to stay.

On another occasion I was buying groceries in Chinatown, and a middle-aged woman was waiting on me. When a kinsman came in and asked her how things were going, her reply was plaintive and negative. But when I asked her if she would rather go back to China, she said, "Go back for what? To starve?" In other words by comparison life here is still preferable to life back home.

When asked what they liked most about living in the United States, the high school students checked chance for education as their number one choice by a wide margin (see Table 11-2). Other reasons trailed far behind. And this high motivation to get an education naturally contributes to their high academic achievement.

TABLE 11-2

THINGS LIKED MOST ABOUT LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES

	Rank Order		
	One	Two	Three
Chance for education	160	29	38
Chance to make money	46	59	69
Better chance for children	15	61	67
Political freedom	23	22	72
More material comforts	13	26	77

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

NOTE: Totals do not add up to number of students surveyed because of no response or more than one reason given for same rank order.

Outlook

The outlook of the high school students surveyed was positive. More than half of both sexes were satisfied with their school work. Almost all of them plan to go to college--surprisingly, more girls planned to than boys. They were more uncertain about being able to find a good job and even less certain about being able to earn a good income (see Table 11-3). This outlook may be quite realistic because the educational attainment of the Chinese in the United States is exceptionally high, but the positions they hold and their income are not consistent with their educational level.[6]

The feelings and beliefs of the same high school students were mixed (see Table 11-4). By and large, they felt that they could succeed if they tried. Surprisingly, 60 percent did not feel that they were better off in the United States, in contrast to the feeling that they did not want to go back. Their aspirations were not low; only 28 to 29 percent would be satisfied if they just had enough. The girls were rather uncertain on this question, as demonstrated by the large number who did not respond. About two out of five students felt that they were not discriminated against, although these data may be misleading. As pointed out previously, the subjects of this study were in schools with large numbers of Chinese and in some instances they were numerically the majority group. Their numbers gave them a sense of security. Feelings of inadequacy were not pronounced; only about a third felt inadequate. On future outlook, 9 percent said it was very bad, 39 percent said it was fair, 32 percent good, 10 percent very good, and 5 percent said it was excellent. Although the curve leans toward the pessimistic side, it is a fairly normal distribution.

Values

How much of the Chinese values did the immigrants retain, and how much of the American values had they already absorbed? (see Table 11-5). Filial piety is still strong, but duty to the family has already been diluted. The idea that boys are better than girls is completely debunked by the girls and even to a large extent by the boys. The majority of both males and females wanted to keep the Chinese customs. The most noticeable feature is the heavy emphasis on getting a good education, the belief in hard work, and that work comes before play. These are the cultural strengths that will stand the immigrants in good stead. Strengthened by the belief that they can succeed if they try, the immigrants come with firm convictions to support them in their struggle.

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[6] Betty Lee Sung, A Survey of Chinese-American Manpower and Employment (New York: Praeger, 1976) p. 62.

TABLE 11-3

OUTLOOK OF CHINESE IMMIGRANT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

	Yes		No		NR	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Males						
Satisfied with school work	71	54	50	38	10	8
Plan to go to college	108	82	14	11	9	7
Able to find good job	67	51	42	32	22	17
Able to earn good income	53	40	42	32	36	27
Females						
Satisfied with school work	73	53	51	37	14	10
Plan to go to college	121	88	13	9	4	3
Able to find good job	85	62	34	25	19	14
Able to earn good income	68	49	40	29	30	22

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

TABLE 11-4

FEELINGS AND BELIEFS [illegible] CHINESE IMMIGRANT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

	Yes		No		NR	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Males						
Can succeed if try	86	66	43	33	2	1
Better off in U.S.	53	40	78	60	0	0
Satisfied with enough	38	29	85	65	8	6
Chinese discriminated against	53	40	77	59	1	1
Feel inadequate	43	33	86	66	2	1
Females						
Can succeed if try	98	71	40	29	0	0
Better off in U.S.	56	41	82	59	0	0
Satisfied with enough	38	28	85	62	15	11
Chinese discriminated against	61	44	76	55	1	1
Feel inadequate	53	38	84	61	1	1

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

TABLE 11-5

VALUES BELIEVED IN BY CHINESE IMMIGRANT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

	Males			Females			Total		
Values	Yes	No	NR	Yes	No	NR	Yes	No	NR
Filial piety	74	49	8	81	45	12	155	94	20
Duty to family	48	66	17	61	61	16	109	127	33
Male priority	55	68	8	13	116	9	68	184	17
Keep Chinese customs	65	47	19	90	35	13	155	82	32
Prize education	102	21	8	110	16	12	212	37	20
Hard work	104	19	8	118	10	10	222	29	18
Don't get involved	57	59	15	66	55	17	123	114	32
Work before play	90	33	8	101	29	8	191	62	16
Parents non-interference	39	76	16	39	88	11	78	164	27
Learn American ways	70	45	16	63	59	16	133	104	32
Money is important	73	47	11	70	56	12	143	103	23

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978.

The belief that one should not get involved is about fifty-fifty, with more leaning to becoming involved. This is a departure from the Chinese tradition. More students still concede that parents have a right to interfere in their children's lives, a strong retention of the Chinese ways. There is ambivalence in the responses to keeping the Chinese customs and learning American ways. The students want to do both in about the same proportion although the girls are more pro-Chinese. There is no conflict in many areas, among them speaking Chinese and English, eating with fork and chopsticks, observing Chinese manners at home and American manners outside. One can do either depending upon the circumstances, but some very real conflicts, such as those used as examples in Chapter VI, do exist.

Is money important? A yes answer would indicate acceptance of material values, but in comparison to hard work and education, money placed much lower in value. It is when these values are reversed, as in the case of the gang members, that deviant behavior results.

Acceptance of Fate

In working with Vietnamese refugees, psychologist Dr. Walter Slote marveled at the equanimity with which some of them overcame their trauma in flight from the country in 1975. In questioning them, he learned that some of their resilience came from the acceptance of fate inherent in their belief that some events are beyond individual control and one should just make the best of it. Among their beliefs is one that is accepted also by some in Western culture: astrology. If one's fortunes and misfortunes are preordained by the positions of the stars and planets, then one accepts the situation until the celestial bodies realign themselves.

A second belief is geomancy, the notion that the surroundings, the ancestral graves, the placement of furniture, the direction of the house must be in alignment with nature and the natural spirits. If things are out of line, fate takes a downward turn. If things are in harmony, all goes well.

A third belief is called fook dock, or benevolence from virtue. One accumulates credits or demerits in heaven five generations before and five generations after one's lifetime. A misdeed or unethical conduct by one's great-great-grandfather may be settled against the great-great-grandson five generations later. Spiritual control is exerted against an individual who is tempted to do wrong. He is restrained by the thought that he is responsible not only for his own fortunes, but that he may affect the destiny of his progeny for five generations to come. Dr. Slote found that many refugees shrugged off their ordeal by saying, "One of my ancestors was at fault for my plight now." In this way, the responsibility is displaced, and even one's own folly may be blamed on someone else; thus is the burden of guilt shared.

A fourth belief, that embodied by Taoism, advocates acceptance of fate and preaches non-action, for life is an endless cycle and everything will come round again.

> Bend and you will be whole
> Curl and you will be straight
> Keep empty and you will be filled
> Grow old and you will be renewed
>
> Bad fortune is what good fortune leans on
> Good fortune is what bad fortune hides in
>
> -- Book of Tao

A fifth belief comes out of Christianity. A very comforting statement, generally uttered in adversity, is "It is God's Will." Why am I in this predicament? Why did So-and-so die? Why did this happen to me? If we belive that God in His infinite wisdom has decreed these things to happen, then it must be for the best. A strong spiritual faith is a great reservoir of strength, and the Vietnamese tap into all these sources. The first four beliefs are also part of the Chinese cultural heritage, for many of the Vietnamese refugees are Chinese ethnics. These inner defenses help them surmount difficulties that overwhelm individuals trying to cope by themselves.

Survival First

Aside from the positive forces mentioned above, which may provide strength and hope to the immigrant families during the difficult period of transplantation and adjustment and may soften the psychological blows, there are a number of negative factors that may mask maladjustment. One factor is that neither parents nor children have very much time to dwell upon their emotional problems. The parents are so exhausted from their work and struggle to establish themselves economically, they simply do not have the energy to think about the more meaningful purposes of human existence. It is survival first. Until they are more secure in the most basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter, they cannot afford to think of whether they are content with their lot.

The children's days are also packed: with school, chores, and work. Their first concern is survival in school, and immigrant children must exert extra effort to compensate for the language barrier. Other issues, such as feeling discriminated against, alienated, uncertain about their identities, and even rejected, must be relegated to a later period when the basics have been satisfied.

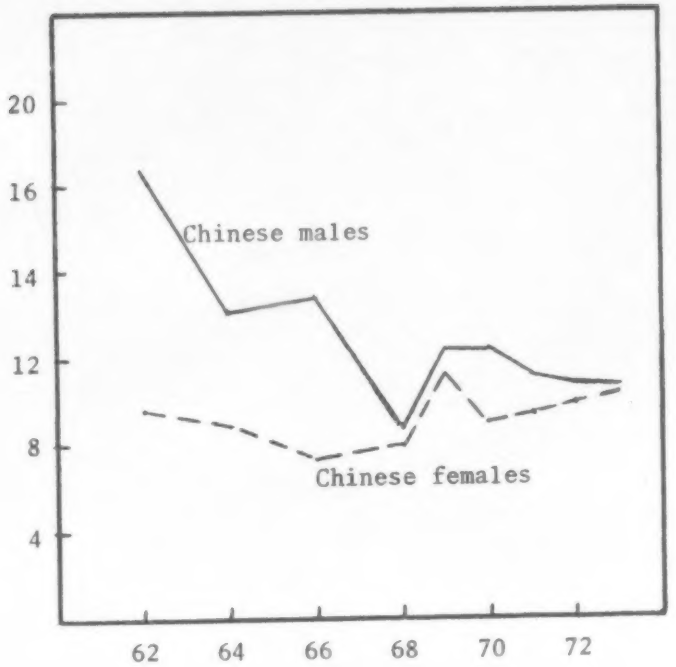
"Face" and Endurance

Evidence of maladjustment may be hidden. "Face" is a very strong cultural trait among the Chinese; they usually try to hide their problems and not admit that anything is wrong. To say that one cannot handle one's children, that one cannot get along with one's spouse, that one feels inadequate is shameful indeed. Add to this the fact that endurance and tolerance are highly valued Chinese character traits. Even if a person is experiencing difficulties, the more tolerance and endurance exhibited, the more character the person shows so he wears his cross like an achievement badge. To such a person, obstacles are but challenges to be overcome. The smooth path is for weaklings; the rocky road builds character. As long as there is hope, the hardships of the present can be borne stoically.

Psychological Breakdown

The ultimate in psychological breakdown would be reflected in commitments to mental institutions or suicides. We attempted to find statistics on the former, but were unsuccessful. Figures for suicides for the Chinese in New York were available, however, and data are presented in Graphs C and D. Graph C gives a historical perspective and shows how the male suicide rate declined drastically when passage of the 1965 Immigration Act permitted the reunification of families. The drop in suicide rate is even more dramatic from 1950, when the male suicide rate was around 30 per 100,000. The present rate of 10 per 100,000 is comparable to the average United States suicide rate.

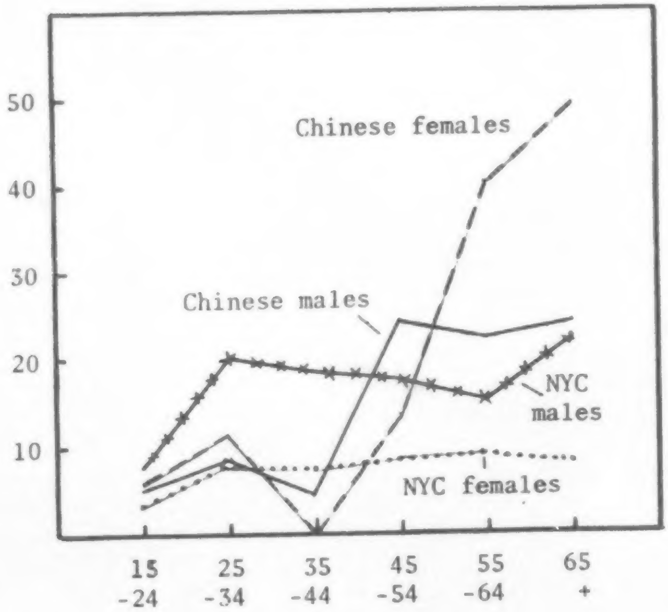
Do the old or the young resort more often to taking their own lives? Graph D breaks down the suicide rate by age group, and it is immediately



GRAPH C

SUICIDE RATES PER 100,000 FOR CHINESE IN THE UNITED STATES, 1962-1973

Source: Tom Tam, "Chinese Suicides", M.A. Columbia University, 1978



GRAPH D

AGE SPECIFIC SUICIDE RATES PER 100,000 POPULATION CHINESE AND NEW YORK CITY, 1974-1976

Source: Tom Tam, Op. cit.

apparent that the rate for Chinese young people is extremely low. However, the cases in New York that have come to my attention over the past several years all involved teenagers or college students. The most recent case occurred on November 10, 1978.[7] Two sisters, age seventeen and thirteen, jumped off the roof of their house because their father had forbidden the older sister to date a Puerto Rican boy. The sisters were immigrants.

Three other cases involved children of my own acquaintances. All of them were outstanding students from middle-class families. All three felt that they had not performed up to the expectations of their parents, and all three ended their lives in dramatic fashion. One jumped in front of a train, one drank lye, and the third jumped from a twentieth floor window. These three were American-born Chinese, not immigrants.

In looking at the methods and reasons for suicide among these five cases of teenage and college-age Chinese youths, Alfred Alder's theory that suicide is veiled aggression comes close to explaining them: These individuals hoped to hurt others by hurting themselves.[8] These offspring were lashing out at their parents' cultural strictures, and they committed suicide in the most melodramatic manner possible.

Although the extremely high suicide rate for older Chinese women is not within the scope of our study, one cannot help but wonder about it, especially in view of the fact that the rate is zero in the 35-44 age bracket. Most likely the women in this age group are busy bringing up their children. They are needed and loved. As the children grow up and leave the family nest, the women lose their purpose in life, and most Chinese women do not have other resources like education to fall back on. They are especially hurt and wounded when their offspring do not show them the respect and filial piety expected within the Chinese cultural context. When life becomes meaningless, the older women end it all.

Most of the data on suicide were taken from Tom Tam's study on "Chinese Suicide,"[9] which provided information up to 1976. More up-to-date figures are given in Table 11-6. The absolute numbers of suicides are low, but again they confirm the disproportionately higher incidence for older Chinese families.

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[7] New York Times (November 12, 1978) p. 45.

[8] Tom Tam, "Chinese Suicide: An Investigation of the Problem in the Various Chinese Communities with Particular Emphasis on New York City," Master's thesis. Columbia University School of Public Health (1978) p. 6.

[9] Ibid, pp. 28-29.

TABLE 11-6

SUICIDES FOR CHINESE IN NEW YORK CITY, 1976, 1977

	1976		1977	
Age Group	Male	Female	Male	Female
15-24	2	1	1	0
25-34	0	0	0	0
35-44	1	0	2	0
45-54	1	2	1	3
55-64	0	1	1	3

SOURCE: New York City, Department of Vital Statistics.

NOTE: The absolute numbers rather than the rate are presented because the base population of the numbers of Chinese in New York used in Tom Tam's study was not given. To attempt to calculate rates for comparative purposes would possibly lead to misinformation.

Are there cultural differences in rate and pattern of suicides? Definitely. Tom Tam even delineates four patterns among the Chinese according to geographical location and stage of Westernization.

1. High suicide rate for the young and low suicide rate for the old in a traditional Chinese community such as Peking in 1921.

2. High suicide rate for the young and high suicide rate for the old in a traditional Chinese community such as Taiwan.

3. Low suicide rate for the young and high suicide rate for the old in partially Westernized Chinese communities such as Hong Kong and Singapore.

4. Extremely low suicide rate for the young and extremely high suicide rate for the old in Chinese communities within a Western society, such as Chinatowns in New York and San Francisco.[10]

Tam believes that the higher status accorded the young in Westernized societies and the lower status accorded the old may explain these configurations.

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[10] Ibid, p. 15.

The Ones on Their Own

In all six schools used in our study, the students had the advantage of not being alone in their transition. The schools were chosen because they had large Chinese enrollments. On the one hand, this facilitated our research; on the other hand, we were studying students in a setting not totally foreign. There was enough of the familiar to ease the adjustment, and there were enough immigrants in the same predicament to lend some comfort. It is easier to accept a bad situation when all are in the same boat. In these schools, the teachers and staff were understanding and supportive. Besides, there was recognition of their language difficulty, as evidenced by the offering of English as a Second Language, orientation classes, and even bilingual classes.

But what of the dispersed immigrant children who do not have such aids? We did not interview or observe any of these, and our study may be faulted for this reason, but the logistics would have been monumental. Some schools may have had one or a few immigrant students. In such instances, the school authorities would not allow any records or personal data to be revealed. On a smaller scale, perhaps, some studies should be made. This is a recommendation that such research be undertaken.

For these children we can imagine that the primary problems, besides that of language, would be feelings of loneliness and isolation. Another would be dealing with name-calling and racism. In the Chinatown and satellite Chinatown schools, there were enough Chinese in numbers to ward off racial slurs, but the dispersed may be the one or the few in an entire school. The racial minority experience is another dimension that is new and puzzling to the newcomer. Which group should he align himself with? Which groups will accept him in their games, in their cliques, or in their circle of friends? The lone immigrant student is the odd man out, and if the child cannot make some attachment he will always feel unwanted.

In sum, the psychological adjustment of the Chinese immigrant children and youth is affected by:

- Their strong desire to come to this country
- The opportunity to get an education here
- Their willingness to work hard
- The realistic outlook they have on life
- The cultural traditions from the Orient that sustain them
- The fact that the immigrants must concern themselves with satisfaction of the basic needs first
- The belief that character is strengthened by tolerance and endurance.

In time, the above factors may be modified by the process of Americanization. The euphoria of coming to this country will wear off. Inroads will be made into the value placed upon tolerance, endurance, hard work, and acceptance of fate. The economic position of these immigrants will improve. A sense of well-being will then depend upon the extent and degree to which these young immigrants attain their aspirations.

Findings

Adjustment was examined within the social context and the psychological context. In other words, do the immigrant children and youths fit into society's expectations and do they feel comfortable within themselves?

1. The children do measure up to teacher expectations, as evidenced by their school records, their low truancy and dropout rates, their good manners, their attendance rates, and the numbers who are college bound.

2. They do measure up to their parents' expectations by studying hard, by working and contributing to the family income, and by maintaining close ties with their parents in spite of parental absence.

3. Maladaptive behavior has been manifest in the formation of gangs and in their vicious activities. The apparent contradiction between the large number who do well and the small number who are deviants can be explained by the fact that those who can keep up with their school work remain in school. The gang members are not in school.

4. Female deviants were few and data were hard to come by.

5. Psychological normality is measured by different yardsticks in the American and Chinese cultures. There is a wide divergence in standards of what is desirable and acceptable behavior. For example, for adults to be extremely close to one's parents is interpreted as immaturity in Western eyes but is considered a cardinal virtue in Chinese eyes.

6. The three ranking areas of difficulty most commonly felt by the high school immigrants were language, worries about college and the future, and fear of the gangs and of being picked on.

7. Factors that may have softened the psychological blows are: the immigrants wanted to come to the United States, they feel that they can succeed if they try, they are willing to work hard, they prize education, and their beliefs predispose them toward acceptance of fate.

8. Two negative factors that may mask psychological maladjustment are: the immigrant families are too busy trying to meet the basic needs of survival to think about anything else, and they may be masking their problems by denying that they even exist.

9. Psychological breakdowns were not mirrored in the number of suicides reported for young Chinese, and data were unavailable on mental health institution admissions.

CONCLUSION

We have come a long way. It is now fitting that we look back and ask: What have we learned? What has this research accomplished? In sum and for the record, we have:

1. Provided vital background information about the Chinese population; the rate of immigration; the settlement patterns; the internal forces, structure, and institutions of the Chinese communities in New York City; a description of the school environment and curricula with which the immigrant children must deal; and a glimpse into their home life.

2. Updated the statistics on the numbers of Chinese immigrants, especially the youthful population entering the United States, and on the numbers of Chinese in New York City and Chinatown area, in view of the fact that the latest census figures are now woefully outdated.

3. Uncovered sources of statistical data pertaining to the Chinese of which many people were unaware. Examples of these are crime statistics, birth and suicide rates, school enrollment figures.

4. Painted a word picture to describe the kind of situation Chinese immigrant children and adolescents encounter when they arrive in this country. Invariably, their preconceived notions about the United States are rudely shattered when they walk into a dilapidated, crowded neighborhood, ridden with crime and fear.

5. Brought out those aspects of Chinese culture that are transferrable to an American setting and that have stood the immigrant children in good stead. Examples of these are the high value placed upon education, the belief that hard work will bring rewards, the respect for authority, and a positive attitude that America is still the land of opportunity. Incidences of maladjustment or deviant behavior invariably confirm a departure from these Chinese cultural values.

6. Pointed out specific areas where experiences and cultural background are not transferrable and must be learned anew. First and foremost among these is the learning of the English language; until some competency is gained, the immigrant will feel impotent. Conflict in cultural values and customs pose equally mystifying problems to the new arrival and may be a source of confusion and embarrassment. Learning to deal with different ethnic groups is puzzling to the Chinese person who has seen none other than Chinese faces before, so he tends to stick with his own people.

7. Related the attempts, so far, on the part of the schools and the community to deal with the huge influx of immigrant children and made critical comments on the effectiveness of such programs as English as a Second Language, bilingual education, and after-school centers. Noted that a few isolated social service agencies have been funded by the local and federal governments to deal with the special problems of the newcomers, but the need greatly exceeds the availability of service.

8. Shown how interpersonal relationships and roles have been altered within the family to meet the changing needs of the new society. Examples of these are the reliance upon peer-group support rather than parental guidance and the reversal of roles between husband and wife or parent and child.

9. Presented a behind-the-scenes account of how gangs recruit and maintain their numbers and how they have terrorized the Chinese community.

10. Indicated the extent and areas of social and psychological breakdowns and, conversely, the strengths and inner resources within these young immigrants to deal successfully with their transplantation.

11. Compiled an extensive bibliography on the literature pertaining to Chinese-Americans or related ethnic groups in their attempts to deal with their immigrant experience.

Bird's-eye View

In brief, the sudden influx of large numbers of Chinese immigrants plucked from a vastly different cultural milieu and set down in a diverse, polyglot megalopolis like New York City is altering the demographic composition of the Chinese population and causing temporary dislocations in the Chinese communities. It is only natural that such a drastic change calls for readjustment in life-style, in thinking and attitudes, and in the social institutions. This report has shown specifically what experiences the immigrant children and youth encounter and how they are reacting, as well as what measures the schools and the communities have or have not taken to help the children in their adjustment process.

By and large, the children are doing well academically and are exhibiting few behavioral problems. A small number, approximately 300 out of a total 20,000 Chinese student enrollment in New York, have caused a disproportionate amount of trouble by forming gangs and terrorizing their own people in their own communities. The outbreak of the gang phenomenon is a clear indication of immigration maladjustment as almost all of the gang members are foreign-born teenagers from Hong Kong. Other manifestations, such as alcholism, drugs, and suicides, were not common. At the moment, the concerns of the immigrant children are the immediate and basic ones. In communities where they are the majority or a sizable number, they have not encountered white racism. How immigrant children react to prejudice, name-calling, exclusion, and discrimination in schools and neighborhoods, where they are the isolated few, merits research in another study. In general, the children are happy to be in this country. In comparison to the lives they left behind, they feel they are better off.

The Chinese family, after it arrives in the United States, is invariably altered by the economic and social exigencies of the American way of life. Employment opportunities for the fathers are very limited and mothers must work. As a result, parental absence is a common feature of the new life. The children shoulder heavy economic burdens as well, so there is little time for recreation or socializing.

The ethnic community structure and institutions were set up to deal with conditions in bygone times. They are not equipped to handle the changed compositions nor the large influx of immigrants. Housing particularly is an acute problem. A response, in part, to this situation is the establishment of satellite Chinatowns in suburban communities. The propensity of the Chinese is to stay close together. Although there are a number of centers of concentrated Chinese population, the larger numbers are dispersed throughout the city. The pattern seems to be that those who have a better education and better financial resources will not congregate in the old Chinatown. At this time, the Chinese communities in New York are in a state of flux and dynamic change.

Policy Recommendations

Drawing on the findings from our research, the following policy recommendations are offered:

1. Monitor the pattern of Chinese immigration to obtain as accurate a picture as possible of the population characteristics of one of the latest immigrant groups arriving at these shores. A valuable source of data will be available from the 1980 census, which has been greatly expanded to provide more detailed data than previously collected on the Chinese in the United States.

2. Disaggregate other governmental statistics such as education and health figures to provide a breakdown for ethnic groups that need special services and that are growing in size and importance.

3. Support and encourage research on our newest immigrant groups from Asia whose cultural backgrounds are so vastly different from those of the former waves of immigrants, especially since so little is known about the Asian immigrants.

4. Concentrate, within the schools, on helping the immigrant children learn English as quickly as possible. More innovative ways than classroom instruction can be explored to accomplish this aim. A suggestion would be to provide real-life adventures for the immigrant children and youth away from the ethnic communities. Trips, summer camps, invitations from non-Chinese groups could provide them with opportunities to practice using their newly acquired vocabulary.

5. Provide or augment support such vitally important personnel as

bilingual guidance counselors, family workers, and tutors. The fact is that the schools have taken over many of the parental duties such as feeding, supervising, providing guidance, and watching over the health of the children. In a way, they are substituting for the parents who are not yet familiar with American ways. There are reservations about the schools becoming surrogate parents leading to further break-down of the family, but in the absence of these services, the children are the ones most directly deprived now. In such a dilemma, the alternative is to provide the services now and try to come up with ways to restore these functions to the parents within the family context.

6. Encourage through classroom assignments, sports participation, social events, and club-hour activities, the intermingling of Chinese children with their peers of other ethnic groups. The lack of interaction with other groups limits the pace of their acculturation and postpones this learning experience.

7. Undertake a special evaluation of the Chinese bilingual programs, per se, apart from political considerations and apart from the Spanish bilingual programs. The Chinese programs deserve to be judged on their own merits.

8. Offer to teachers multi-cultural appreciation classes as in-service courses or prepare and distribute to teachers who come into contact with Chinese immigrant children more data about their history and cultural background. This will act to ease some of the bicultural conflict experienced by the newcomers.

9. Utilize the peer-group support system to help the new immigrant find a place among his schoolmates and to help him over those rough spots until he becomes better adjusted. For example, teachers can assign a welcome committee of schoolmates to take the newcomer to lunch, to the playground, to the library, and to classes to make him feel more secure in his surroundings. The same welcome committee can help tutor in English or interpret for a while.

10. Provide gang-avoidance education (similar to sex education or fire drills) to acquaint the young teenager with ways to deal with gang recruitment efforts. Such education would reduce the panic and fear that many youngsters experience when confronted with gang threats and perhaps prevent some from falling into the clutches of the gangs.

11. Help the children by helping the parents:
    a. locate suitable housing near to but not in overcrowded Chinatown. In other words, establish a housing counseling center to guide the new arrivals in their choice of living quarters and furnishings.

    b. locate jobs other than the traditional ones of restaurant work for men and garment factory work for women. This can be accomplished by the establishment of an office of the State Employment Service with bilingual personnel to develop jobs and refer job applicants.

c. learn English and learn about American customs and beliefs, so that the parents are exposed to the children's experiences outside of the home, in the hope that the language and cultural gap between parent and children can be reduced.

12. Explore and undertake measures to revitalize and renew the Chinatown neighborhood. Cities like Oakland, California, and Boston, Massachusetts, have already completed plans for the renewal of their Chinatowns and Sacramento has a spanking new Chinatown, but New York, with the largest Chinese population of all, has done little in this direction. The city should realize that Chinatown is a major tourist attraction, and that upgrading the neighborhood will improve a unique asset as well as provide a better environment for the Chinatown residents.

13. Remember, in any plans for upgrading Chinatown, that it is not only a tourist attraction but also home to thousands of youngsters groping to put down roots in a new country. The trauma of cultural shock is enough without adding further concern about traffic hazards, fear for personal safety, and worry about physical and mental health risks.

Mission Accomplished

In this shrinking globe, the mass migration of peoples is becoming an increasingly common phenomenon. The merging of cultural streams may be invigorating but it is at the same time turbulent. Children, like water, are fluid and resilent, but unlike water they are impressionable, their personalities retain the imprints of experience. Their first and early encounters in a new homeland can color their subsequent outlook and attitudes. This country has a stake in knowing how the reception process operates for these, our future citizens.

In this study, our intent was to uncover and document the impact of immigration on the lives of Chinese immigrant children. Our recommendations were offered in the belief that knowledge brings recognition and insight, that recognition and insight bring understanding, that all of these bring rational forces to bear on constructive action.

In the hope that constructive measures will be taken to recognize the increasing role of the ethnic Chinese in the American scene, to appreciate the cultural heritage they bring with them, to be cognizant of their transitional dislocations, and to help smooth the path on their way to full participation in American life, we will put the final period to this report with the words: Mission Accomplished.

APPENDIX TABLE I-A

CHINESE IMMIGRANTS ADMITTED BY SEX AND AGE GROUP, 1966-1975

	1966		1967		1968		1969		1970	
TOTAL IMMIGRANTS	17,608		25,096		16,434		20,893		17,956	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
TOTAL	8,613	8,995	12,811	12,285	7,862	8,572	10,001	10,892	8,586	9,370
Under 5 Yrs.	548	520	734	646	399	450	686	622	437	438
5-9 Yrs.	953	828	1,125	1,006	639	518	989	891	685	636
10-19 Yrs.	1,888	1,739	2,309	2,187	1,412	1,523	1,964	2,037	1,427	1,428
20-29 Yrs.	1,376	1,649	2,221	2,913	1,436	2,409	1,588	2,756	1,776	3,249
30-39 Yrs.	1,817	1,480	3,310	2,329	1,996	1,478	2,337	1,823	2,258	1,602
40-49 Yrs.	998	912	1,528	1,223	904	789	1,277	1,182	1,028	862
50-59 Yrs.	532	904	879	955	530	645	709	744	551	557
60-69 Yrs.	355	630	514	683	379	478	311	545	285	374
70-79 Yrs.	130	289	160	288	151	223	117	239	117	177
80 Yrs. +	16	44	31	55	16	59	23	53	22	47

	1971		1972		1973		1974		1975	
TOTAL IMMIGRANTS	17,622		21,730		21,656		22,685		23,427	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
TOTAL	8,287	9,335	10,437	11,293	9,937	11,719	10,724	11,961	11,179	12,248
Under 5 Yrs.	396	390	617	531	571	539	599	582	611	562
5-9 Yrs.	561	509	755	734	750	660	769	741	749	653
10-19 Yrs.	1,153	1,245	1,506	1,548	1,445	1,583	1,602	1,737	1,862	1,771
20-29 Yrs.	2,106	3,679	2,610	4,264	2,537	4,058	3,091	4,209	3,381	4,295
30-39 Yrs.	2,345	1,606	2,622	1,797	1,981	1,630	1,905	1,641	1,866	1,621
40-49 Yrs.	901	767	1,234	965	1,164	1,045	1,189	1,064	1,180	1,184
50-59 Yrs.	484	556	629	688	765	1,119	818	1,013	807	1,103
60-69 Yrs.	246	367	323	467	526	743	532	680	548	734
70-79 Yrs.	87	171	112	239	174	277	196	238	147	259
80 Yrs. +	8	45	29	60	24	65	23	56	28	66

201 Source: U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Annual Reports (Washington, D.C.: 1966-1975), Tables 9.

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APPENDIX TABLE I-B

PERCENTAGE OF CHINESE IMMIGRANTS ADMITTED, BY SEX AND AGE GROUP, 1966-1975

	1966		1967		1968		1969		1970	
AGE GROUP	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Total (100%)										
Under 5 Yrs.	6.4	5.8	5.7	5.3	5.1	5.2	6.9	5.7	5.1	4.7
5-9 Yrs.	11.1	9.2	8.8	8.2	8.1	6.0	9.9	8.2	8.0	6.8
10-19 Yrs.	21.9	19.3	18.0	17.8	18.0	17.5	19.6	18.7	16.6	15.2
20-29 Yrs.	16.0	18.3	17.3	23.7	18.3	28.1	15.9	25.3	20.7	34.7
30-39 Yrs.	21.1	16.5	25.8	19.0	25.4	17.2	23.4	16.7	26.3	17.1
40-49 Yrs.	11.6	10.1	11.9	10.0	11.5	9.2	12.8	10.9	12.0	9.2
50-59 Yrs.	6.2	10.1	6.9	7.8	6.7	7.5	7.1	6.8	6.4	5.9
60-69 Yrs.	4.1	7.0	4.0	5.6	4.8	5.6	3.1	5.0	3.3	4.0
70-79 Yrs.	1.5	3.2	1.2	2.3	1.9	2.6	1.2	2.2	1.4	1.9
80 Yrs. +	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.7	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.5

	1971		1972		1973		1974		1975	
AGE GROUP	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Total (100%)										
Under 5 Yrs.	4.8	4.2	5.9	4.7	5.8	4.6	5.6	4.9	5.5	4.6
5-9 Yrs.	6.8	5.5	7.2	6.5	7.6	5.6	7.2	6.2	6.7	5.3
10-19 Yrs.	13.9	13.3	14.4	13.7	14.5	13.5	14.9	14.5	16.7	14.5
20-29 Yrs.	25.4	39.4	25.0	37.8	25.5	34.6	28.8	35.2	30.2	35.1
30-39 Yrs.	28.3	17.2	25.1	15.9	19.9	13.9	17.8	13.7	16.7	13.2
40-49 Yrs.	10.9	8.2	11.8	8.5	11.7	8.9	11.1	8.9	10.6	9.7
50-59 Yrs.	5.8	6.0	6.0	6.1	7.7	9.6	7.6	8.5	7.2	9.0
60-69 Yrs.	3.0	3.9	3.1	4.1	5.3	6.3	5.0	5.7	4.9	6.0
70-79 Yrs.	1.0	1.8	1.1	2.1	1.8	2.4	1.8	2.0	1.3	2.1
80 Yrs. +	0.1	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.5

Source: Appendix Table I-A

APPENDIX TABLE II

STUDENTS ADMITTED AS NONIMMIGRANTS FROM CHINA OR HONG KONG 1963-1976

Year	Students from Hong Kong	Students from China incl. Taiwan	Total
1963	831	1,214	2,045
1964	854	1,674	2,528
1965	895	1,995	2,890
1966	1,202	2,713	3,915
1967	1,287	2,127	3,414
1968	1,673	2,306	3,979
1969	2,412	3,082	5,494
1970	3,336	3,400	6,736
1971	3,954	3,014	6,968
1972	4,633	3,561	8,194
1973	3,645	4,161	7,806
1974	4,550	4,639	9,189
1975	4,126	3,772	7,898
1976	3,936	3,001	6,937

SOURCE: Immigration and Naturalization Service, Annual Reports (Washington, D.C.: 1963-1976), Table 16.

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